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ABSTRACT

A survey of Massachusetts high school students in March 1989 compared and contrasted vocational-technical high school students with other high school students (college preparatory and general studies) in four major areas: decision to enroll in vocational-technical or in other programs, high school experiences, post-high school plans and career plans, and opinions about vocational-technical education. The written survey was administered in class to more than 2,000 vocational-technical and 1,500 college preparatory or general studies 10th- and 12th-grade students in 41 schools. Among the findings were the following: (1) vocational students were much more likely to have had opposition to their choice to enroll in a vocational program than either college preparatory or general studies students; (2) most students, especially vocational students, rated guidance services poorly; (3) general studies students were more likely to think that high school experiences were better than they had thought they would be; (4) most college preparatory students planned to attend a four-year college after high school, general students planned to go to a two-year college, and vocational students planned to work full time; and (5) most students either held negative attitudes toward vocational education or thought other people did. (KC)

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ED313562

Survey of Massachusetts High School Students

Program Enrollment Decisions, High School Experiences, Career Plans and Post High School Plans, and Opinions About Vocational-Technical Education

November, 1989

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Executive Summary

In Massachusetts, vocational-technical education is an optional program of studies available to high school students in 79 program areas at 115 high schools across the state. The alternative, non-vocational high school programs can be classified as *college preparatory* or *general studies* and are offered at approximately 259 high schools throughout the state.

The decision to enroll in a vocational-technical or non-vocational high school program is an important one, yet little is known about how students in Massachusetts make this decision, why they choose vocational or non-vocational programs, and who assists them in this decision. This report summarizes the results of a statewide survey of grade 10 and 12 students about their choice of vocational or non-vocational programs.

Student Survey

The study was exploratory and compared and contrasted vocational-technical high school students with their non-vocational high school counterparts (college preparatory and general studies students) in four major areas: the decision to enroll in vocational-technical or non-vocational programs, high school experiences, post high school plans and career plans, and opinions about vocational-technical education.

The written survey was administered by teachers to intact classes of tenth and twelfth grade students during class time. Over 1,500 non-vocational students and 2,000 vocational-technical students in 238 classes in 41 schools completed the survey during March, 1989.

In addition to responses to survey questions, over 1,350 written comments by students were analyzed.

Results: The Decision to Enroll in a Vocational-Technical or Non-Vocational High School Program

- *Who was important in the decision?*

All three types of students (vocational, college prep, and general studies) rated the importance of their own role in the decision more highly than that of their parents, friends, siblings, counselors, or teachers. Over 80% of vocational-technical students, 86% of college prep students, and 68% of general studies students rated their own role as "very important."

- *Did anyone disagree with the student's decision?*

Vocational students were 3 to 4 times as likely as college prep or general studies students to report that someone disagreed with their decision. Almost 1 in 5 grade 10 vocational-technical students has encountered some resistance to his decision to enroll in a vocational-technical program; in contrast, only 1 in 20 college prep students and 1 in 17 general studies students has received disapproval for her decision to enroll in a non-vocational program.

- *How did students learn about high school programs and options?*

Two of the most frequently indicated sources of information about high school for all three types of students were: junior high or middle school counselors and friends.

- *How often did students meet with a guidance counselor during their last year in junior high or middle school to discuss their high school plans?*

Over 40% of all students reported that they never met with a guidance counselor to discuss high school or their career goals. In addition, most of 97 written comments about junior high guidance services were unfavorable. Many of these comments indicated that junior high or middle school counselors did not provide information about vocational-technical programs or provided incorrect information, did not encourage students to enroll in vocational-technical education programs, and, in some cases, actively discouraged students from enrolling in vocational-technical programs.

- *Why did vocational-technical students enroll in vocational-technical programs?*

Five of 13 listed reasons were identified by half or more of the vocational-technical students as influencing their decision:

- Interested in vocational-technical education (81%)
- Need or want to be prepared for job after high school (74%)
- Have the ability or skills for vocational-technical education (68%)
- Vocational-technical education was the best way to meet career goals (60%)
- Prefer practical learning experiences to learning about theories and facts (54%)

The four reasons least likely to be identified by vocational-technical students were:

- Guidance counselor suggested enrolling in vocational-technical program (15%)
- Received poor grades in junior high or middle school (17%)
- Do not want to go to college (23%)
- Did not want to attend neighborhood high school (27%)

- *Why did non-vocational students enroll in non-vocational programs?*

College prep and general studies students differed substantially in their reasons for enrolling in a non-vocational program instead of a vocational-technical program.

Six of 11 listed reasons were identified by half or more of the college prep students:

- Want to go to college (90%)
- Received good grades in junior high or middle school (72%)
- Thought would get a better education in a non-vocational program (71%)
- Never really thought about it; just assumed would enroll in non-vocational program (58%)
- Not interested in vocational-technical education (57%)
- Not sure what career to pursue (53%)

In contrast, only 1 of the 11 listed reasons was reported by half or more of the general studies students:

- Not sure what career to pursue (53%)

- *Did students have enough information to make a good decision?*

Overall, only 57% of the students believed that they had enough information to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a vocational-technical or non-vocational program.

As a follow-up question, students were asked what information would have helped them. Of 374 open-ended responses, the three most frequently given were:

- more information about vocational-technical programs
- more (or any) discussions with a junior high counselor
- information about the differences between vocational-technical and non-vocational programs and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Results: High School Experiences

- *How often did students meet with a high school guidance counselor during the past year to discuss career goals and plans?*

For all three types of students, grade 10 students were significantly more likely than grade 12 students to report that they *never* met with their high school counselor.

As late as grade 12, almost one-third (31%) of vocational-technical students and 15% of general studies students have *never* met with a guidance counselor to discuss their career plans. In contrast, only 3% of grade 12 college prep students *never* met with their counselor during the past year.

- *How satisfied are students with guidance services?*

Overall, less than one-third (29%) of the students were *very satisfied* with high school guidance services and almost one-fifth (18%) were *not at all satisfied*. Vocational-technical and general studies students were generally less satisfied than college prep students.

Satisfaction with guidance services was significantly related to the number of meetings with a guidance counselor; the greater the number of meetings with a counselor, the higher the level of satisfaction.

Approximately 92 vocational-technical students and 193 non-vocational students provided written comments about high school guidance services; most of these comments were unfavorable.

For vocational-technical students, the predominant themes in their comments were:

- Vocational-technical students are not given enough guidance; counselors only care about college-bound students (17%)
- Counseling services are poor; not helpful (17%)
- Need more career guidance and college information (16%)
- Counseling services are very good; very helpful (16%)
- Need better guidance counselors that are younger, more understanding, less negative (12%)
- Counselors are often not available (8%)
- Counselors do not spend enough time with students (7%)

For non-vocational students, the predominant themes in their comments were:

- Need better counselors that are more competent, less pushy, more understanding (24%)
- Counseling services are poor, disorganized, not helpful (22%)
- Counseling services are very good; very helpful (20%)
- Counselors should meet with students more frequently (14%)
- Counselors are often not available (6%)
- Counselors only care about college-bound students (6%)

- *Has high school turned out to be like students thought it would be like?*

College prep students (49%) were more likely than vocational-technical students (37%) or general studies students (37%) to indicate that high school has turned out to be what they thought it would be like. But, vocational-technical students (30%) were more likely than either college prep (22%) or general studies students (18%) to indicate that high school was *better* than they anticipated. And, general studies students (25%) were more likely than college prep (13%) and vocational-technical students (16%) to report that high school was *worse* than they believed it would be.

- *Have students considered dropping out of school? If so, has their high school program helped them stay in school?*

One-fourth (25%) of vocational-technical students and over one-fourth (27%) of general studies students reported that they have seriously considered dropping out of high school. In contrast, only 7% of the college prep students indicated that they have thought about dropping out of high school.

Although vocational-technical and general studies students were equally likely to have considered dropping out, potential vocational-technical student dropouts (52%) were over three times as likely as potential general studies student dropouts (16%) to indicate that their high school program helped them remain in school.

- *Would students still enroll in the same type of high school program?*

Vocational students and college prep students were much more likely than general studies students to indicate that they would enroll in the same type of high school program (vocational or non-vocational) if they had the decision to make all over again. Over three-fourths (77%) of grade 12 vocational-technical students and 87% of grade 12 college prep students said they would choose the same type of high school program. In contrast, only half (53%) of the grade 12 general studies students indicated that they would still choose a non-vocational program instead of a vocational-technical program.

Results: Career Plans and Plans After High School

- *Have students decided on a career area they want to pursue?*

Grade 12 students were more likely than grade 10 students to report that they have decided on a career area. At both grade levels, vocational-technical students were more likely than either college prep or general studies students to have decided on a career.

- *When did students decide on a career area?*

Vocational students were more likely than college prep or general studies students to have decided on a career area before grade 11. Almost two-thirds of grade 12 vocational-technical students versus

40% of college prep and 42% of general studies students who have decided on a career decided on this career before grade 11.

- *What do students plan to do after completing high school?*

For grade 12 college prep students, attending a four-year college was the clear-cut, predominant activity chosen by students (81%). For grade 12 general studies students, attending a two-year college was the most frequently indicated activity (42%). For grade 12 vocational-technical students, working full-time was the activity cited most often (54%).

Results: Opinions About Vocational-Technical Education

Most (94%) vocational-technical students view vocational-technical education favorably. But college prep students are about evenly divided; 51% hold favorable opinions about vocational-technical education and 49% indicated that they have an unfavorable opinion. General studies students are somewhat more favorable about vocational-technical education than college prep students; 59% rated their opinion as favorable. In addition, half or more of the non-vocational students perceived the opinions of their friends, siblings, high school teachers, the general public, and college professors to be unfavorable.

Over 600 written comments about vocational-technical education shed further light on the nature of students' opinions.

The comments of vocational-technical students were overwhelmingly positive, and included the following major themes:

- Vocational-technical education provides excellent preparation for the world of work or for further education (33%)
- Vocational-technical education is great; awesome (22%)
- People have the wrong idea about vocational-technical education; the image of vocational-technical education needs to be improved (16%)
- Vocational-technical schools are too strict; school policies are unfair; some teachers are not good (8%)

The major themes found in the comments of non-vocational students include:

- Vocational-technical education is an easy away out for lazy students; a way to avoid academics (19%)
- Vocational-technical programs are for students who want to learn a trade; non-vocational programs are for students who want to go to college (17%)
- Vocational-technical education is a good options for some students; vocational-technical education is beneficial (14%)
- Non-vocational programs provide a better education than vocational-technical programs do (14%)
- Vocational-technical programs are for losers and drug abusers
- Not interested in vocational-technical education (12%)
- Bad reputation of vocational-technical programs prevents students from enrolling in vocational-technical programs (11%).

Issues Raised by Survey About Guidance and Counseling

Students' responses to survey questions, along with their written comments, raised several issues about junior high and high school guidance and counseling services.

- Many students did not have enough information in junior high or middle school to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a vocational-technical or non-vocational high school program.

- For many students, junior high or middle school guidance counseling was either non-existent or was slanted toward encouraging students to enroll in non-vocational programs.

- Many students would like to meet more frequently with a high school guidance counselor to discuss career goals and post high school plans.

- College preparatory students have greater access to high school guidance services than general studies students do.

- Grade 12 students have greater access to high school guidance services than grade 10 students do.

- Many students are not satisfied with high school guidance services.

- High schools across the state vary substantially in how frequently high school guidance services are provided to students.

Implications for Vocational-Technical Educators

The survey results carry implications for vocational-technical educators who are concerned with recruiting students who are likely to benefit from vocational-technical education programs.

- Most college prep students would not have been good candidates for vocational-technical programs, but many general studies students might have benefitted from vocational-technical programs. For the most part, college prep students were satisfied with their decision to enroll in a non-vocational program, had clear cut plans after high school that they believe were best met through a college preparatory high school program, were not interested in vocational-technical education, and were disinclined to even consider vocational-technical education as an option.

  In contrast, many general studies students were not satisfied with their decision to enroll in a non-vocational program, had post high school plans that might best be served by vocational-technical education, were interested in vocational-technical education, and were more receptive than college prep students to the possibility of enrolling in vocational-technical programs.

- Four barriers that might have kept general studies students from enrolling in vocational-technical education programs were: lack of information about vocational-technical education, lack of junior high guidance, a poor image of vocational-technical education, and misperceptions about vocational-technical education.

- One key to reducing these barriers lies in increased efforts by the Division of Occupational Education and individual vocational-technical school districts to disseminate information about vocational-technical education. The survey identified three types of information that are needed:

  - information that students reported would have helped them, including descriptions of vocational-technical programs and shop areas and information about the differences between vocational-technical and non-vocational high school programs;

- information to improve the image of vocational-technical education, especially information that conveys the message that vocational-technical education can be a positive choice with positive outcomes, not merely a last resort for losers or a haven for drug abusers; and

- information to combat misperceptions about vocational-technical education, including the misperceptions that students must know what career they plan to pursue in order to benefit from vocational-technical programs, that a vocational-technical education precludes a college education, and that vocational-technical education in Massachusetts encompasses only trade areas such as carpentry, plumbing, and auto mechanics.

Introduction and Methodology

In Massachusetts, vocational-technical education is an optional program of studies available to high school students. State-approved Chapter 74 vocational programs are offered in 79 different program areas at 26 regional vocational-technical high schools, 3 county agricultural high schools, 27 city and town vocational-technical high schools, 16 academic regional high schools, and 43 comprehensive high schools.

The alternative, non-vocational high school programs can be classified as either *college preparatory* or *general studies*. These non-vocational programs are available at approximately 206 city and town high schools and 53 academic regional high schools.

The decision to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational high school program is seemingly an important one that not only influences students' high school experiences, but is likely to have longer-term effects, for example, on students' career development. Yet relatively little is known about "how" students in Massachusetts make this decision, "why" they choose vocational or non-vocational programs, and "who" assists them in the decision-making process.

This report summarizes the results of a statewide survey of 2,000 vocational technical students and over 1,500 non-vocational students in grades 10 and 12 about their choice of vocational or non-vocational programs and about their attitudes toward vocational education. The goal of this report is to describe survey results, highlight some issues raised by the findings that should be of interest to both vocational and non-vocational educators, and suggest some possible implications for vocational educators. This report is intended to serve as a starting point for discussions among educators and other policymakers; it is from these discussions that the full implications of the survey results will be derived.

Purpose of the Survey

The original impetus for the study was to address concerns of vocational educators about the recruitment of students likely to benefit from high school vocational-technical education programs, in particular, to determine if the image of vocational education influences students' choice of vocational or non-vocational programs. The written survey evolved into a more detailed examination of the decision-making process, high school experiences and post high school plans, and opinions about vocational education.

The study was exploratory and compared and contrasted vocational-technical high school students in grades 10 and 12 with their non-vocational high school counterparts (college prep and general studies students) in four major areas:

- The decision to enroll in vocational or non-vocational programs, including reasons for the choice, persons involved in the decision, and sources of information;
- High school experiences, including use of and satisfaction with high school guidance services, if students have considered dropping out, and if students are satisfied with their decision to enroll in vocational or non-vocational program;
- Career plans and plans after completing high school; and
- Opinions about vocational education, including students' reported opinions and their perceptions of the opinions of others.

Survey Development and Survey Questions

Two similar versions of the students survey, one for vocational-technical students and one for non-vocational students, were developed over a period of several months and underwent extensive review and revisions. The survey was developed and revised on the basis of a review of the literature, anecdotal evidence from vocational educators, a small pilot test of draft versions of the instrument, and the comments of reviewers. The survey was reviewed by representatives of several groups across the state:

- State Council on Vocational Education
- Massachusetts Occupational Education Commission
- Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents
- Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators
- Student Advisory Committee for Occupational Education

- Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA)

The final versions of the student survey (see Appendix A) contain six major groups of items.

Background Characteristics

Students were asked to indicate:

- School
- Grade (10 or 12)
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Vocational Program Area (vocational students only)
- Program of Studies (non-vocational students only)

Students identified themselves as vocational, college preparatory, or general studies students on the basis of the following definitions that were included on the cover page of the survey.

"You are considered to be in a **VOCATIONAL** education high school program if:

- You are taking an organized program of studies in: agriculture, distributive education, health occupations, consumer and homemaking, technical occupations, or trade and industry. Your program also includes related theory and academic courses.

You are NOT considered to be in a vocational education program if you are taking a program of studies in the business and office occupations, industrial arts, or home economics.

You are considered to be in a **NON-VOCATIONAL** high school program if:

- You are taking a *College Preparatory* program of studies (that is, you have fairly definite plans to attend college after completing high school and you are taking academic courses in high school that are likely to enhance your chances of being accepted into college and succeeding in college-level work)

OR

- You are taking a *General Studies* program (that is, you are NOT taking a college preparatory or vocational program; you are taking courses that lead to a high school diploma)

OR

- You are enrolled in a program in business and office occupations, industrial arts, or home economics."

For this report, results were analyzed separately for only two of these background characteristics: grade level and type of program (vocational, college prep, or general studies).

The Decision to Enroll in a Vocational or Non-Vocational Program

Nine questions elicited information about why students decided to enroll in either a vocational or non-vocational program, how important other people were in the decision-making process, how students learned about the high school options available to them, how often students met with a junior high or middle school guidance counselor, and whether students believed they had enough information to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational program.

High School Experiences

Eight questions in the survey dealt with several diverse aspects of students' experiences in high school: changes in high schools or programs, how often students met with a guidance counselor, satisfaction with guidance services, what guidance counselors have encouraged students to do after completing high school, whether high school has turned out to be what students thought it would be like, whether students have considered dropping out of high school, and if students would enroll in the same type of high school program if they "had it to do all over again."

Career Plans and Post High School Plans

Five survey questions covered students' career plans and plans when they complete high school: whether students have decided on a career area, what careers students plan to pursue, what students plan to do after completing high school, and what students' parents have encouraged then to do after high school.

Opinions About Vocational Education

Students were asked to rate as either favorable or unfavorable their opinion of the vocational education programs offered in Massachusetts high schools. Students were also asked to indicate whether nine other groups of people (parents, friends, junior high guidance, junior high teachers, siblings, high school teachers, general public, employers, and college professors) have favorable or unfavorable opinions about vocational education.

Comments

Students were invited to provide written comments about high school, vocational and non-vocational education programs, or the career guidance and counseling services offered in junior high and high school.

Sample

The selection of a sample of students to complete the survey was guided by several considerations and constraints, including the following.

- A goal of the study was to construct a statewide picture, not to characterize individual schools, individual vocational programs or program areas, or individual students.

- The study was exploratory; it was designed to gather a variety of information and draw tentative conclusions about unexplored variables, not to characterize precisely students' responses to any one question.

- The resources available to conduct the study were extremely limited; this impacted study in at least three ways: limiting the number of students survey, using intact classes, and relying on the cooperation of teachers to administer the surveys to their students.

Table 1 summarizes the number of students, classes, and schools included in the survey. Classes of vocational students were selected to include a mix of school types, regions of the state, and Chapter 74 vocational programs areas. Classes of non-vocational students were selected to correspond to the vocational schools in the sample, that is, the non-vocational city and town high school that corresponded to a vocational city and town high school or a non-vocational high school in one of the sending communities served by a regional vocational-technical high school.

Survey Procedures

The survey was designed to be administered by teachers to their intact classes of students during approximately 15-20 minutes of class time. The scheduling, administration, and return of surveys was accomplished only through the considerable cooperative efforts of school administrators, school contact persons, and teachers.

There were four major steps involved; Appendix B contains samples of all correspondence, scheduling forms, and supporting materials used to execute the survey.

First, a letter from Dr. David Cronin, Associate Commissioner of the Division of Occupational Education, was sent to the Superintendents/Superintendent-Directors of the schools identified for inclusion in the survey. This letter briefly described the study and requested the school's cooperation in implementing the survey. The Superintendent was asked to identify a School Contact Person who would oversee the scheduling, distribution, collection, and return of surveys.

Second, the designated School Contact Person completed a "Survey Scheduling Form." The form identified the target students at each school. For schools where vocational students were to be surveyed, target students were all tenth and twelfth garde vocational-technical students enrolled in four specified vocational program areas.

For schools where non-vocational students were to be surveyed, target students were a specified number of tenth and twelfth grade students equal to 10%-20% of the school's enrollment in these two grades. The Contact Persons at these schools were asked to confer with the Occupational Education Team Leader in their region in selecting intact classes of target students that included a representative mix of the types of non-vocational students found at that school.

After identifying specific classes that matched the target group, the School Contact Person listed the teacher's name, number of students in the class, and a tentative survey date (between March 9, 1989 and March 31, 1989). Completed Survey Scheduling Forms were returned to the Bureau of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Division of Occupational Education.

Third, upon receipt of completed Survey Scheduling Forms, Bureau of Research staff prepared individual survey packets for each teacher identified on the Scheduling Form. These survey packets included one-page instructions for teachers and enough surveys for students in the class. All teacher packets for each school were then sent to the School Contact Person, along with further instructions.

Fourth, the School Contact Person distributed the survey packets to teachers and ensured that the surveys were administered on the scheduled dates. The School Contact Person at vocational schools mailed all completed materials directly to the Bureau of Research. At the non-vocational schools, the Contact Person turned all completed materials over to a Regional Occupational Education staff member, who in turn returned them to the Bureau of Research.

Table 1

Number of Schools, Classes, and Students in the Sample

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

Vocational-Technical Students:

11 Regional Vocational-Technical High Schools
11 City and Town Vocational-Technical High Schools
2 Academic Regional High Schools
3 Comprehensive High Schools

Non-Vocational (College Prep and General Studies) Students:

14 Non-Vocational City and Town High Schools

NUMBER OF CLASSES

	Grade 10	Grade 12
Vocational-Technical Students	160*	160*
Non-Vocational Students	40	38

NUMBER OF STUDENTS**

	Grade 10	Grade 12
Vocational-Technical Students	1,041	919
College Prep Students	548	520
General Studies Students	195	258

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* 160 classes total for grades 10 and 12; many shop classes combined both grades.

** Excludes 49 students who did not report their grade as 10 or 12.

Results: Decision to Enroll in Vocational or Non-Vocational High School Program

Nine questions in the survey sought information about why students decided to enroll in either a vocational or non-vocational high program, how important various people were in the decision-making process, how students learned about the high school options available to them, how often students met with a junior high or middle school guidance counselor, and whether students believed they had enough information to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational education program. In addition, students' written comments provided information about the nature of the decision-making process.

How Important People Were in the Decision

Students were asked to indicate how important various people were in the decision that they would enroll in either a vocational or non-vocational education program. Table 2 summarizes this information and Figure 1 depicts the percentages of students who rated six types of people as "*very important*" and "*not at all*" important in the decision process.

All three types of students (vocational, college prep, and general studies) rated the importance of their own role in the decision more highly than that of their parents, friends, siblings, counselors, or teachers. Over 80% of vocational students and college prep students rated their role as "*very important*". However, only about two-thirds of general studies students indicated that they were "*very important*" in this decision.

Parents received the second highest average ratings for importance in the decision, although less than half of the students indicated that their parents were "*very important*" in the decision. The role of parents was greater for college prep students than for either vocational or general studies students; 44% of grade 12 college prep students rated their parents' participation as "*very important*" compared with 30% of vocational students and only 22% of general studies students.

Table 2

How Important People Were in the Decision that Student Would Enroll in Vocational Education or Non-Vocational Education

Person(s)	Vocational		College Prep		General Studies	
	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
You (Student)						
Very Important	79%	83%	84%	88%	68%	67%
Somewhat	12%	11%	11%	8%	18%	13%
Not at All	3%	2%	2%	3%	5%	8%
Don't Know	6%	5%	3%	1%	9%	12%
Your Parents						
Very Important	32%	30%	46%	44%	25%	22%
Somewhat	41%	45%	38%	38%	35%	43%
Not at All	17%	17%	13%	15%	28%	22%
Don't Know	10%	8%	3%	3%	12%	13%
Your Friends						
Very Important	13%	9%	10%	13%	11%	10%
Somewhat	31%	38%	39%	41%	28%	36%
Not at All	38%	38%	40%	41%	46%	37%
Don't Know	18%	15%	11%	5%	15%	17%
Brothers and Sisters						
Very Important	12%	11%	9%	10%	9%	8%
Somewhat	21%	24%	24%	23%	19%	19%
Not at All	47%	48%	58%	60%	57%	56%
Don't Know	20%	17%	9%	7%	15%	18%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Table 2 (continued)

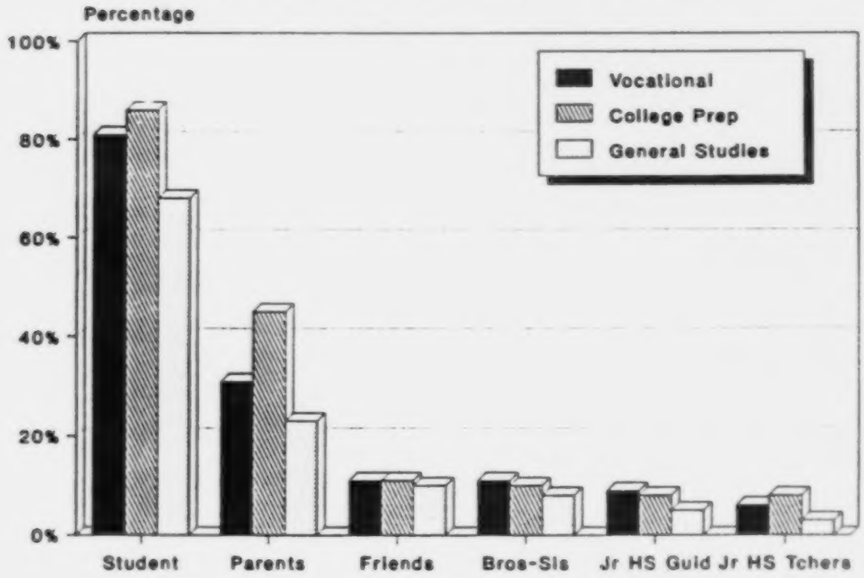
How Important People Were in the Decision that Student Would Enroll in Vocational Education or Non-Vocational Education

Person(s)	**Vocational**		**College Prep**		**General Studies**	
	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Junior High School Guidance Counselor						
Very Important	10%	8%	8%	7%	4%	5%
Somewhat	18%	16%	26%	20%	22%	17%
Not at All	49%	56%	54%	61%	54%	60%
Don't Know	23%	20%	12%	12%	20%	18%
Junior High School Teachers						
Very Important	6%	5%	8%	9%	3%	3%
Somewhat	14%	12%	29%	23%	17%	15%
Not at All	53%	62%	52%	57%	58%	61%
Don't Know	27%	21%	11%	12%	22%	20%
Other (Open-ended responses):						
Girlfriend-Boyfriend	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
High School Teacher	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Grandparents	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other Relatives	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
High School Guidance	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Former Students	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%

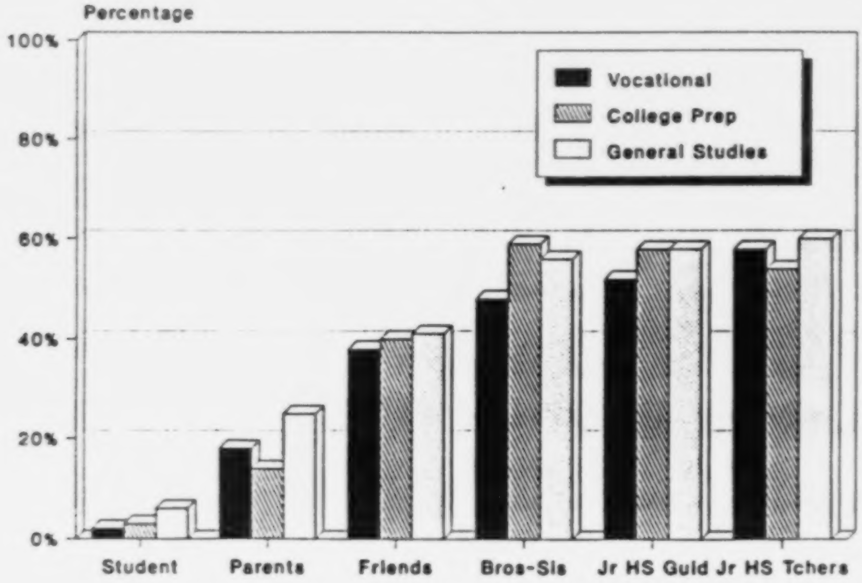
Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 1

People Rated "VERY IMPORTANT" in Decision



People Rated "NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT" in Decision



According to students, their friends, siblings, junior high school guidance counselor, and junior high school teachers played much less of an important role in the decision. Approximately half or more of all students indicated that their friends, siblings, junior high school guidance counselor and teachers were "*not at all*" important in the decision.

The written comments of some students reinforce the finding that students believe that they played a primary role in the decision.

> *"I felt it was the thing I wanted to do. My decision alone!"*
>
> *"All those questions about other people influencing my decision - useless. At my house, I am in charge of my life. I have heard my friends opinion, but that would hardly affect me."*
>
> *"My parents had no say on whether I was to attend a voc or non-voc H.S. It was my life not theirs. It was me who was to chose."*
>
> *"People should be able to pick and choose what the best route for themselves should be not what anyone else says!"*

Did Anyone Disagree with Student's Decision?

Students were asked if anyone disagreed with the student's decision to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational program. These results are given in Table 3.

Vocational students were 3 to 4 times as likely as college prep or general studies students to report that someone disagreed with their decision. Almost 1 in 5 grade 10 vocational students has encountered some resistance to his decision to enroll in a vocational education program; in contrast only 1 in 20 college prep students and only 1 in 17 general studies students has received disapproval for her decision to enroll in a non-vocational program.

Table 4 indicates which people disagreed with students' decision. For vocational students, friends and parents were about equally likely to have disagreed with students; to a lesser extent, junior high

Table 3

Did Anyone Disagree With Student's Decision to Enroll in Vocational or Non-Vocational Education Program?

Anyone Disagreed?	Vocational Students		College Prep Students		General Studies Students	
	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Yes	19%	14%	5%	5%	6%	6%
No	69%	76%	88%	88%	75%	75%
Not Sure	12%	10%	7%	7%	19%	19%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Table 4

Who Disagreed With Student's Decision to Enroll in Vocational or Non-Vocational Education Program

Who Disagreed	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
No One/Not Sure	84%	95%	94%
Friends	5%	.3%	.2%
Junior High School Guidance	1%	.2%	0%
Junior High School Teachers	1%	.4%	.2%
Parents	6%	2%	3%
Student	.3%	.2%	0%
Other Relative	1%	.2%	1%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

school guidance and junior high school teachers opposed the decision for students to enroll in vocational education. For college prep and general studies students, parents were identified as the persons who disagreed with their decisions.

How Students Learned About High School Programs and Options

Vocational students were asked to indicate how they learned about vocational education and the vocational education options available to them. In a parallel question, non-vocational students were asked how they learned about the high school programs and options available to them. Table 5 gives the percentages of students who provided each response.

Junior high or middle school guidance counselors were one of the most frequently indicated sources of information for all three types of students, although significantly more so for college prep students (47%) and general studies students (42%) than for vocational students (33%). This disparity is confirmed by students' written comments, which revealed that junior high guidance counselors were more likely to provide information about non-vocational program options than about vocational program options.

Friends were also a frequently indicated source of information about high school options, but more so for college prep (40%) and vocational students (44%) than for general studies students (35%). Interestingly, although junior high school guidance counselors and friends were two of the most frequently cited sources of information, they were both rated by many students as having little or no importance in the student's decision to enroll in vocational or non-vocational education programs.

Junior high school teachers were an important source of information for college prep students (41%), but not for general studies or vocational students. Only 22% of general studies students reported that they learned about high school from junior high teachers, and only 14% of vocational students learned about vocational programs from their junior high teachers.

Parents were cited as a source of information by about one-third of vocational and college prep students, but only one-fourth of general

Table 5

How Students Learned About High School Programs and Options

	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Don't Know	9%	10%	21%
Junior High School Guidance	33%	47%	42%
Junior High School Teachers	14%	41%	22%
Parents	30%	33%	24%
Friends	44%	40%	35%
Brothers and Sisters	26%	32%	23%
Visited High School	38%	27%	23%
Heard High School Representative Speak	30%	35%	24%
Read Brochures or Catalogs	19%	28%	18%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

studies students reported that they learned about high school from their parents. This finding is consistent with the result reported earlier that parents generally played less of a role in the decision-making process for general studies students than for vocational or college prep students.

Also noteworthy are the findings that:

- Vocational students were more likely to visit the high school (38%) than were college prep (27%) or general studies students (23%).
- Written materials, such as brochures and catalogs, were more likely to be used as a source of information by college prep students (28%) than by either vocational students (19%) or general studies students (18%).
- General studies students were twice as likely (21%) as vocational students (9%) and college prep students (10%) to report that they "Don't Know" how they learned about high school options.

How Often Students Met with Junior High Guidance

Students used a four-point scale (*never, 1-2 times, 3-5 times, 6 or more times*) to indicate how often they met with a guidance counselor during their last year in junior high or middle school to discuss high school and their career plans. Table 6 and Figure 2 summarize responses.

Over 40% of all students reported that they *never* met with a guidance counselor in junior high or middle school to discuss high school or their career plans. Some students' written comments noted that there were no guidance counselors in junior high school, and many students indicated that they were displeased about this lack of guidance.

Table 7 summarizes the content of 97 written comments about junior high guidance services. Following are examples of some of these comments.

Table 6

How Often Students Met With a Guidance Counselor During Their Last Year in Junior High or Middle School

	Vocational Students		**College Prep Students**		**General Studies Students**	
How Often	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Never	41%	41%	42%	51%	42%	40%
1 - 2 Times	38%	39%	42%	38%	35%	35%
3 - 5 Times	13%	15%	11%	9%	16%	20%
6 or More Times	8%	5%	4%	2%	7%	5%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 2

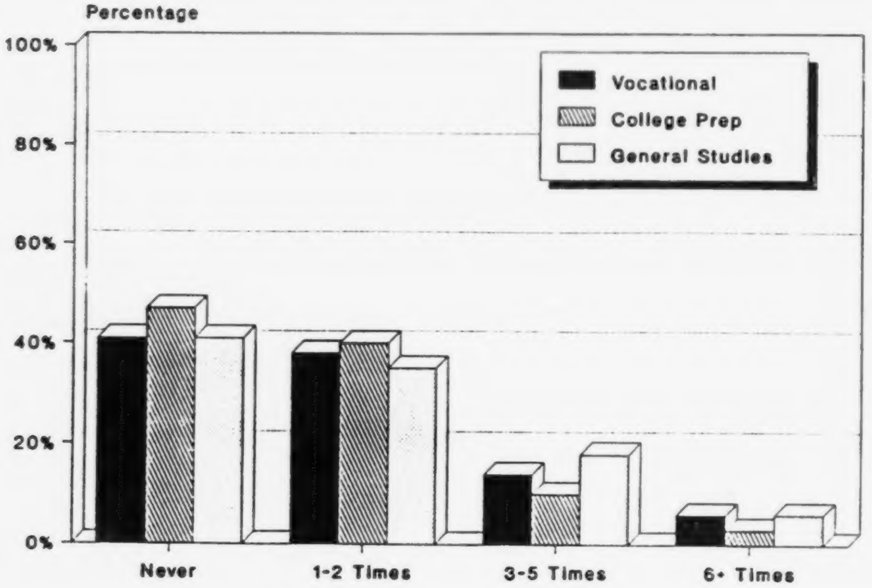


Table 7

Written Comments About Junior High/Middle School Guidance Services

Vocational Students	**Non-Vocational Students**
■ Guidance counselors should provide more information about vocational education (32%)	■ Guidance counselors did not provide any information about vocational programs; discouraged enrolling in vocational programs (44%)
■ Guidance counselors discouraged students from enrolling in vocational programs; provided misinformation about vocational education (25%)	■ There were no junior high or middle school guidance counselors; never met with a counselor (30%)
■ There were no junior high guidance counselors (20%)	■ Guidance was no help at all (16%)
■ Guidance services were poor (12%)	■ Guidance was very helpful (7%)
■ Need more career guidance in junior high (5%)	■ Had no need for guidance services in junior high (4%)
■ Guidance services were good (5%)	

Note. Number of comments = 97.

Vocational Students' Comments About Junior High or Middle School Guidance

Most of the vocational students' comments expressed dissatisfaction with junior high guidance services; many of these comments indicated that junior high school counselors did not provide enough information about vocational programs or provided incorrect information, did not encourage students to enroll in vocational programs, and in some cases, actively discouraged students from enrolling in vocational programs.

"Jr. high schools should be more outgoing if kids decide to go to a vocational high school and not discourage the students from doing what they feel will help them fulfill there goals in life."

"Guidance counselors discourage smart people from coming to the voke."

"Junior high guidance gives you misinformation about vocational schools."

"In junior high it was said by teachers, guidance counselors, and other adults that if you want to go to college go to a reg. high school which is not true."

"They should encourage the kids about going to a vocational school because when I was in jr. high I didn't really hear about vocational schools."

"In junior high the counseling didn't do anything except collect their paychecks at the end of the week and try to screw up students futures."

"If the middle school was not so defensive about voc. ed it would have made my decision easier."

"I think vocational education has received alot of bad press. In my opinion Voc. Ed. is very underrated, (and middle school guidance counselors's should be better educated on the voc. ed. system) This would stop them from turning away 'alot' of interested potential voc. ed students, just because they think everybody that goes to these schools is a druggie."

"I feel vocational education is not as known about in junior high as it should be. (Alot of students aren't even aware that there are guidance and counseling at junior high.)"

"When I was in Jr. High we didn't have any guidance counselors. I would have liked to have had one because there were alot of questions I had about different high schools. I think that is what is needed the most in Jr. High Schools."

"I feel that junior high school doesn't tell you enough about the vocational advantages over the non vocational school and I think when I was in junior high my guidance counselor spoke to me ONCE!"

"I think that there should be more emphasis on vocational education in the junior highs and middle schools."

"No counseling in junior high."

"Virtually I am [angry] that I was not enabled to enter the program until my last year of high school. I am much happier within the school system this year but am angry that it took junior high counselors, as well as senior high 6 years to get me within the right program. [X] School systems should be more aware of student goals in life and should offer the vocational program throughout the young adults schooling. More time and effort should be put in to getting students happy not out."

"We didn't have any counseling in my junior high school."

"More guidance by counselors. If they were more enthused about the tech we would've gotten more info. It was all up to the individual."

Non-Vocational Students' Comments About Junior High or Middle School Guidance

Most of the non-vocational students' comments also expressed dissatisfaction with junior high or middle school guidance services.

"In counseling there really wasn't a choice. It was that you go to the high school unless for a reason you wanted tc go to the vocational school. There is a lot of negative feelings towards voc. schools and that the people are there because they are dumb."

"Vocational programs seem to have a bad reputation. Junior high guidance counselors don't generally discuss it with students with average or above grades, but rather with students with lower grades. Vocational programs have the stereotype kids who have bad grades & can't cope with regular high school & don't care about college. I don't think its as bad as everyone portrays it, the stereotype should somewhat be changed with time."

"I had no junior high counseling at all. Just with the course selections for high school."

"When entering high school I really did not know the difference in programs between the two. I may have chosen a vocational school if I knew what it had to offer."

"In junior high school, I never met with my guidance counselor. I never had an opportunity to discuss career goals. The only time kids meet with the counselors was when they were in trouble."

"I had no guidance counselor in junior high and I feel that I was given very little assistance when deciding about my high school courses."

"I think there should be more discussion in jr. high about the decision. I can't remember any type of guidance counselors in jr. high."

"I wish I had the chance to really sit down and talk to my jr. high guidance about school. It would have saved me alot of hard times."

"Choosing to attend a non-vocational high school always seemed to be the "normal" thing to do. I feel that the emphasis to attend a vocational high school was always placed on the "bad" kids, the ones that were always in trouble, and got bad grades. I think more time should be spent on changing that stereotype."

"Guidance in my junior high was terrible. I can't remember meeting my counselor more than once, and he wasn't to helpful with that. To me

> *he seemed that he really didn't help me or others that had him. He was useless with advice for me."*

> *"I think the counseling in the jr. high should be worked on. The kids should know more about the two different options they have."*

> *"In junior high I was given alot of bad information. They made if very hard and confusing for me to pick my courses. I ended up making alot of bad choices because of them. They didn't know what they were talking about."*

> *"There were no career guidance and counseling services offered in my junior high. I think more kids would be better prepared for the choices they have to make about high school if there were."*

> *"All I can say is that my only guidance counsel in junior high school was my social studies teacher (was a good help) there was no official guidance counselor however."*

> *"Guidance counselors at the junior high never really discussed the vocational versus the non-vocational high school programs."*

> *"The area junior high schools do not have guidance counselors, and nobody really to help kids decide what programs to take in high school. The 1st year in high school is very influential, and I think more guidance is needed in making the most out of it. They should at least make 1 rotating guidance counselor for the 3 middle schools."*

Did Students Consider Enrolling in Other Types of High School Programs?

Vocational students were asked if they ever considered or thought about enrolling in a non-vocational high school program instead of a vocational program. Non-vocational students were asked if they ever considered enrolling in a vocational program instead of a non-vocational program. Table 8 and Figure 3 summarize responses to this question.

Approximately half or more of all students reported that they did "*not at all*" consider enrolling in the other types of high school program (non-vocational for vocational students; vocational for college

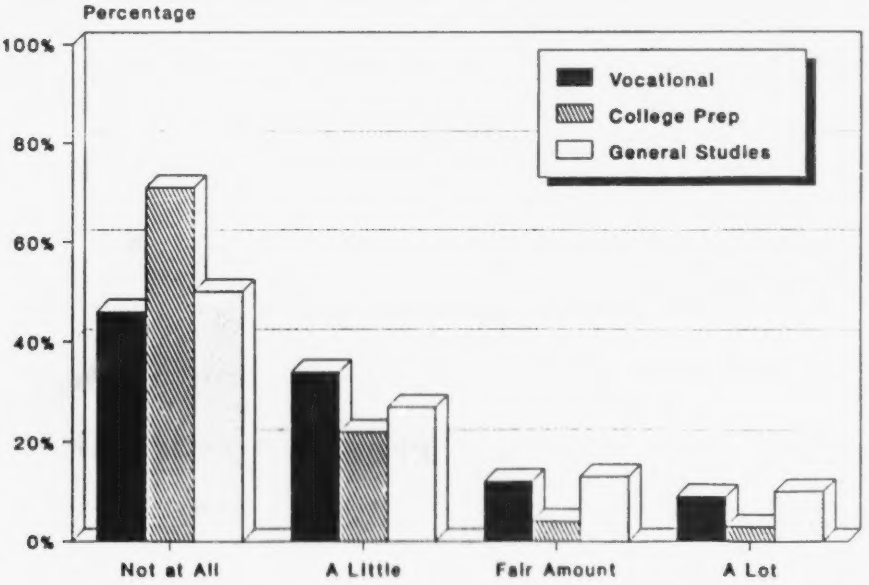
Table 8

Did Vocational Students Consider Enrolling in a Non-Vocational Program? Did Non-Vocational Students Consider Enrolling in a Vocational Program?

	Vocational Students		**College Prep Students**		**General Studies Students**	
Consider Other Program?	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Not at All	45%	46%	69%	74%	49%	51%
A Little	33%	35%	22%	21%	27%	27%
A Fair Amount	12%	11%	5%	4%	10%	15%
A Lot	10%	8%	4%	1%	14%	7%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 3



prep and general studies students).

But, college prep students were much more likely than either vocational students or general studies students to indicate that they did "*not at all*" consider enrolling in the other type of high school program. Similarly, approximately one-fifth of vocational students and one-fourth of general studies students reported that they thought either "*a fair amount*" or "*a lot*" about enrolling in the other type of high school program, compared to only 5% of grade 12 college prep students.

This finding suggests that the decision to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational program represents much more of a "real decision", in the sense of weighing options, for vocational and general studies students than for college prep students; for most college prep students the choice of a non-vocational program is apparently almost a foregone conclusion.

Reasons for Enrolling in Vocational Education

Vocational students used a three-point scale (*yes, no, not sure*) to indicate whether each of 13 listed reasons influenced their decision to enroll in a vocational education program. Non-vocational students were asked to indicate the reasons they thought vocational students enrolled in vocational program. Table 9 gives the percentage of students who checked the "yes" response for each of the 13 reasons.

Reasons Reported by Vocational Students. Five of the 13 reasons were identified by half or more of the vocational students as influencing their decision:

- Interested in vocational education (81%)
- Need/want to be prepared to enter a job when graduate from high school (74%)
- Have the ability or skills for vocational education (68%)
- Vocational education was best way to meet career goals (60%)
- Prefer practical learning experiences to learning about

Table 9

Reasons Vocational Students Enrolled in Vocational Education

According to Vocational Students and According to Non-Vocational Students

Reason	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Interested in vocational education	81%	84%	74%
Do not want to go to college	23%	53%	45%
Knew what career wanted to pursue after high school	43%	68%	63%
Have the ability or skills for vocational education	68%	67%	56%
Prefer practical experiences to learning about facts and theories	54%	58%	47%
Parents wanted student to attend a vocational program	30%	18%	17%
Need/want to be prepared to enter a job when graduate from high school	74%	77%	65%
Want to be prepared to study a technical subject in college	25%	36%	38%
Guidance counselor suggested enrolling in vocational education	15%	20%	18%
Vocational education was best way to meet career goals	60%	64%	53%
Received poor grades in junior high or middle school	17%	37%	26%
Did not want to attend neighborhood high school	27%	22%	20%
Don't know	14%	15%	17%

theories and facts (54%)

These five reasons generally represent "positive" reasons for choosing vocational education: interest, ability, awareness of a particular learning style preference, and awareness of the best way to meet career goals.

The four reasons least likely to be identified by vocational students as influencing their decision to enroll in vocational education were:

- Guidance counselor suggested enrolling in vocational education (15%)
- Received poor grades in junior high or middle school (17%)
- Do not want to go to college (23%)
- Did not want to attend neighborhood high school (27%)

Non-Vocational Students' Perceptions. For 8 of the 13 listed reasons, the perceptions of non-vocational students about the reasons vocational students enrolled in vocational programs were fairly similar to the actual reasons reported by vocational students. The responses of college prep students were generally more "on target" than those of general studies students.

These eight reasons were:

- Interested in vocational education (81% of vocational students versus 84% of college prep students identified this as a reason)
- Have the ability or skills for vocational education (68% of vocational students compared to 67% of college prep students indicated this reason)
- Prefer practical experiences to learning about theories and facts (54% of vocational students versus 58% of college prep students)
- Need/want to be prepared to enter a job after high school (74% of vocational students identified this as a reason; 77% of college prep students perceived this as a reason)

- Guidance counselor suggested enrolling in vocational education (15% of vocational students versus 20% of college prep students)

- Vocational education was best way to meet career goals (60% of vocational students compared to 64% of college prep students cited this as a reason)

- Did not want to attend neighborhood high school (27% of vocational students versus 22% of college prep students identified this reason)

- Don't know (14% of vocational students compared to 15% of college prep students)

However, for 5 of 13 listed reasons, there were notable differences in the percentages of non-vocational students who perceived the reason to have influenced vocational students' decisions and the percentage of vocational students who reported that the reason actually influenced their decision.

- College prep and general studies students were twice as likely as vocational students to indicate that not wanting to go to college influenced vocational students' decision; 53% of college prep students and 45% of general studies students versus only 23% of vocational students cited this as a reason.

- College prep and general studies students overestimated the extent to which vocational students knew what career they wanted to pursue after college; 68% of college prep and 63% of general studies students reported this as a reason, compared to 43% of vocational students.

- Only 18% of college prep and 17% of general studies students believed that vocational students' parents wanted them to attend a vocational program, in contrast, 30% of vocational students cited this as a reason.

- College prep (36%) and general studies students (38%) were more likely than vocational students to report that vocational students (25%) decided to enroll in a vocational program because they wanted to be prepared to study a technical subject in college.

- College prep and general studies students overestimated the percentage of vocational students who enrolled in vocational programs because they received poor grades in junior high or middle school. Only 17% of vocational students cited poor grades as a reason versus 37% of college prep and 26% of general studies students.

These results would seem to paint a generally positive picture of non-vocational students' perceptions of vocational education (in terms of the reasons they attribute to vocational students for enrolling in vocational programs). That is, non-vocational students recognized interest, ability, career plans, and learning style preferences as predominant reasons for vocational students choosing vocational education. However, non-vocational students also believe that poor grades and disinterest in college are reasons that vocational students enrolled in vocational programs. And, the written comments of non-vocational students paint a somewhat more negative picture of their perceptions of vocational education. As detailed in a later section of this report, one-third of non-vocational students' written comments characterized vocational programs as an easy way out for losers and drug users.

Reasons for Enrolling in Non-Vocational Education Programs

Non-vocational (college prep and general studies) students were asked to indicate whether each of 11 listed reasons influenced their decision to enroll in a non-vocational program instead of a vocational program. Vocational students were asked to indicate the reasons they thought non-vocational students enrolled in non-vocational programs. Table 10 gives the percentage of students who identified each reason as influencing the choice of non-vocational education.

Reasons Reported by Non-Vocational Students. College prep students and general studies students differed substantially in the reasons they reported.

Six of 11 reasons were identified by half or more of college prep students.

- Want to go to college (90%)

Table 10

Reasons Non-Vocational Students Enrolled in Non-Vocational Education

According to Non-Vocational Students and According to Vocational Students

Reason	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students	Vocational Students
Never really thought about it; just assumed would	58%	38%	47%
Not interested in vocational education	57%	34%	48%
Want to go to college	90%	46%	54%
Parents wanted student to attend non-vocational program	44%	26%	47%
Think vocational programs have a bad reputation	25%	18%	48%
Received good grades in junior high or middle school	72%	48%	36%
Not sure what career wanted to pursue	53%	53%	48%
Do not have the ability or skills for vocational education	8%	11%	25%
Guidance counselor encouraged student to enroll in non-vocational program	18%	11%	25%
Thought would get a better education in non-vocational program	71%	44%	52%
Prefer learning about new ideas and facts rather than practical experiences	45%	33%	35%

- Received good grades in junior high (72%)
- Thought would get a better education in a non-vocational program (71%)
- Never really thought about; just assumed would (58%)
- Not interested in vocational education (57%)
- Not sure what career wanted to pursue (53%)

In contrast, only 1 of the 11 listed reasons was reported by half or more of the general studies students:

- Not sure what career to pursue (53%)

There were several other notable differences between college prep students and general studies students in their reasons for enrolling in non-vocational programs.

- 58% of college prep students versus only 38% of general studies students reported that they never really thought about; just assumed they would enroll in a non-vocational program. This result is consistent with the earlier finding that college prep students were much more likely than general studies students to have "*not at all*" thought about or considered in enrolling in a vocational program.
- Most (90%) of the college prep students, compared to less than half (46%) of the general studies students, indicated that wanting to go to college influenced their choice of a non-vocational program.
- Almost half (44%) of college prep students indicated that they enrolled in a non-vocational program because their parents wanted them to; in contrast, only one-fourth (26%) of general studies students cited this reason. This finding concurs with the earlier result that parents generally played a larger role in the decision for college prep students than for general studies students.
- College prep students (72%) were more likely than general studies students (48%) to report that receiving good grades in

junior high influenced their decision.

- College prep students (71%) were also more likely than general studies students (44%) to indicate that a reason for choosing a non-vocational program was that they thought they would get a better education in a non-vocational program than in a vocational program.

- Almost half (45%) of college prep students versus one-third (33%) of general studies students reported that a reason for choosing non-vocational education was that they prefer learning about new ideas and facts rather than practical experiences.

Vocational Students' Perceptions. It is difficult to assess the "accuracy" of vocational students' perceptions of the reasons that non-vocational students decided to enroll in non-vocational programs because the two types of non-vocational students (college prep and general studies) differ widely in the reasons they reported. For some of the 11 listed reasons, vocational students' perceptions more closely matched the reasons cited by college prep students (rather than general studies students). For some of the listed reasons, the percentage of vocational students who attributed a reason to non-vocational students was midway between the percentage of college prep students and the percentage of general studies students who identified that reason as influencing their decision.

There were, however, some notable differences between vocational students' perceptions and non-vocational students' stated reasons.

- Only about half (54%) of the vocational students believed that wanting to go to college influenced non-vocational students' decision. In contrast, almost all (90%) of the college prep students cited this as a reason.

- Almost half (48%) of the vocational students indicated that non-vocational students enrolled in non-vocational programs because of the bad reputation of vocational programs. But only one-fourth (25%) of college prep students and less than one-fifth (18%) of general studies students cited this as a reason for their decision.

- Vocational students underestimated the extent to which receiving good grades in junior high or middle school influenced non-vocational students' decision. Only about one-third (36%) of vocational students versus almost three-fourths (72%) of college prep students and almost half (48%) of general studies students identified this as a reason.

- Vocational students (25%) were more likely than college prep students (8%) and general studies students (11%) to attribute non-vocational students' decision to enroll in non-vocational programs to a lack of ability or skills for vocational education.

Did Students Have Enough Information to Make a Good Decision?

Students were asked to think back to their last year in junior high or middle school and to use a three-point scale (*yes, no, not sure*) to report if they think they had enough information to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a vocational education or a non-vocational education program. As a follow-up question, students who believed that they did not have enough information were asked to indicate what information would have been helpful to them. Tables 11 and 12 summarize students' responses to these two questions.

Overall, only 57% of the students reported that they had enough information to make a good decision about enrolling in a vocational or non-vocational program. But there were noteworthy differences among the three types of students, and also between the two grade levels. College prep students were most likely to indicate that they did have enough information to make a good decision and general studies students were least likely to report that they had enough information.

Almost three-fourths (71%) of grade 10 and 61% of grade 12 college prep students versus 59% of grade 10 and 54% of grade 12 vocational students and 55% of grade 10 and only 39% of grade 12 general studies students believed they had enough information. College prep students may have been more satisfied than general studies students with the amount of information they had because, as noted earlier, for most college prep students there was no real decision involved; most never considered vocational education as an option. In contrast, about one-fourth of general studies students thought either a "*fair amount*" or "*a lot*" about enrolling in vocational programs; in-

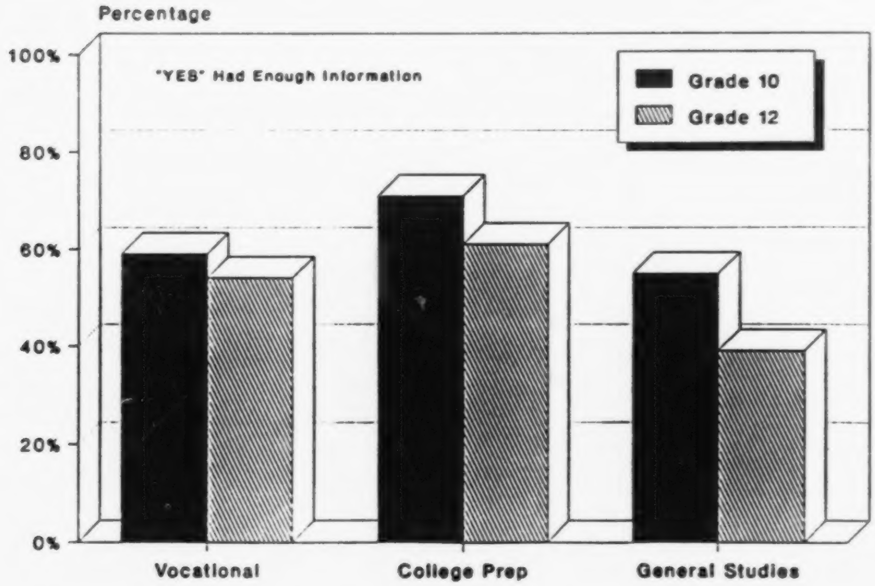
Table 11

Did Students Have Enough Information to Make a Good Decision About Whether to Enroll in a Vocational or Non-Vocational Education Program?

Enough Information?	Vocational Students Gr 10	 Gr 12	College Prep Students Gr 10	 Gr 12	General Studies Students Gr 10	 Gr 12
Yes	59%	54%	71%	61%	55%	39%
No	17%	24%	9%	22%	19%	31%
Not Sure	24%	22%	20%	17%	26%	30%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 4



actual decision was involved.

For all three types of students, grade 12 students were less likely than grade 10 students to report that they had enough information to make a good decision, although the difference between the two grades was less pronounced for vocational students than for college prep and general studies students. The reasons for these grade level differences are not known. It may be the case that grade 10 students, who are less removed temporally from the decision than grade 12 students are better able to remember the types and amount of information they received. Or it may be the case that grade 12 students, with the benefit of additional experience in high school, are better able than grade 10 students to reflect on the longer-term consequences of the decision they made and the types of information that would have helped them.

Information That Would Have Helped Students

Table 12 summarizes the content of 374 open-ended responses about the types of information that students believe would have been helpful to them in deciding whether to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational program.

The five most frequently given responses were:

- More information about vocational schools/what goes on in vocational schools/good and bad things about vocational education
- Any (or more) discussions with a junior high or middle school guidance counselor
- Information about the differences between vocational and non-vocational programs and the advantages and disadvantages of each
- More information about programs and courses
- More detailed information about the different vocational shop areas available/occupational areas.

Table 12

Information That Would Have Helped Students Decide Whether to Enroll in a Vocational or Non-Vocational Program

■ More information about vocational education; what goes on in vocational schools; good and bad things about vocational education	16%
■ Any (or more) discussions with junior high or middle school guidance counselor	10%
■ Information about the differences between vocational and non-vocational programs; advantages and disadvantages of vocational and non-vocational programs	9%
■ More information about programs and courses	8%
■ More detailed information about different vocational shops available	7%
■ Tour or field trips to high schools	6%
■ Speaker or representative from high school	6%
■ Information about opportunities and options	6%
■ Information about college	6%
■ Brochures and catalogs	6%
■ Information about what really happens in high school; what to expect in high school	5%
■ Career and salary information; educational requirements for different careers; help deciding on career	5%
■ Explain things better	3%
■ "Anything"; received no information at all	3%
■ Someone to talk to; someone to answer questions	2%
■ Talk with high school students or graduates about what programs are like	2%

Results: High School Experiences

Eight questions in the survey dealt with several diverse aspects of students' experiences in high school: changes in high schools or programs, how often students have met with a guidance counselor, satisfaction with guidance services, what guidance counselors have encouraged students to do after completing high, whether high school has turned out to be what students thought it would be like, whether students have considered dropping out of high school, and if students would enroll in the same type of high school program if they "had it to do all over again."

In addition to their responses to these questions, several students provided written comments about their high school experiences.

Changes in High Schools or Programs

Students were asked to indicate all changes they have made in high schools or programs since they began high school, and why they made these changes. Table 13 summarizes the types of changes made and Table 14 lists the predominant reasons for these changes.

College prep students were least likely to have made any changes and vocational students were most likely to have done so; 90% of college prep students and 83% of general studies students have made no changes. In contrast, only 73% of vocational students have remained in the same high school and program since beginning high school. Interestingly, 15% of the vocational students in the sample began their high school career enrolled in a non-vocational program, but later switched to a vocational education program.

The three types of students differed in the reasons given for any changes they have made. Vocational students were most likely to have made changes for programmatic reasons: to enter a vocational program or to change shop areas. In contrast, college prep students and general studies students were most likely to have made changes because they moved. For all three types of students, 12% - 13% of those who made changes did so because the "did not like" their previous high school.

Table 13

Changes in High Schools or Programs Since Students Began High School

Change	**Vocational Students**	**College Preparatory Students**	**General Studies Students**
No Changes	73%	90%	83%
Changed High Schools	10%	9%	13%
Changed from Vocational Program to Non-Vocational Program	1%	1%	4%
Changed from Non-Vocational Program to Vocational Program	15%	0%	0%
Changed Vocational Program Area	8%	0%	0%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Table 14

Reasons Students Changed Schools or Programs

VOCATIONAL STUDENTS	
Wanted to learn a trade or occupation	35%
Wanted a different shop area	16%
Moved	13%
Did not like the high school	12%
Wanted to; felt like it	4%
COLLEGE PREP STUDENTS	
Moved	74%
Did not like the high school	12%
School was boring; not challenging	4%
To get a better education	3%
GENERAL STUDIES STUDENTS	
Moved	48%
Did not like the high school	13%
Received poor grades; was asked to leave school	12%
Wanted to; felt like it	9%

Note. Number of students: Vocational = 441; College Prep = 91; General Studies = 69.

How Often Students Met With High School Guidance Counselors

Students used four response categories (*never, 1-2 times, 3-5 times, and 6 or more times*) to report how many times they met with their high school guidance counselor since the beginning of the school year to discuss their career goals and plans after high school. Table 15 and Figure 5 summarize students' responses to this question.

There were noteworthy differences by grade level and by type of student. In addition, further analysis showed a high degree of variability among the 41 schools included in the survey, and an index of the ratio of guidance personnel to students was found to be significantly related to the number of meetings with guidance counselors.

Grade Level Differences. For all three types of students, grade 10 students were significantly more likely than grade 12 students to report that they *never* met with their guidance counselor and grade 12 students were significantly more likely than grade 10 students to indicate that they met with their counselor *6 or more times*. The difference between grade 10 and grade 12 students was most pronounced for college prep students.

- For vocational students, 51% of grade 10 students versus 31% of grade 12 students *never* met with their guidance counselor during the school year.

- For college prep students, grade 10 students (34%) were 11 times more likely than grade 12 students (3%) to report that they *never* met with their counselor; grade 12 students (35%) were 9 times more likely than grade 10 students (4%) to have met with their guidance counselor *6 or more times*.

- For general studies students, 36% of grade 10 students versus 15% of grade 12 students *never* met with their counselor.

This finding suggests that career planning, with the assistance of a guidance counselor, is occurring only fairly late in many students' high school careers.

Table 15

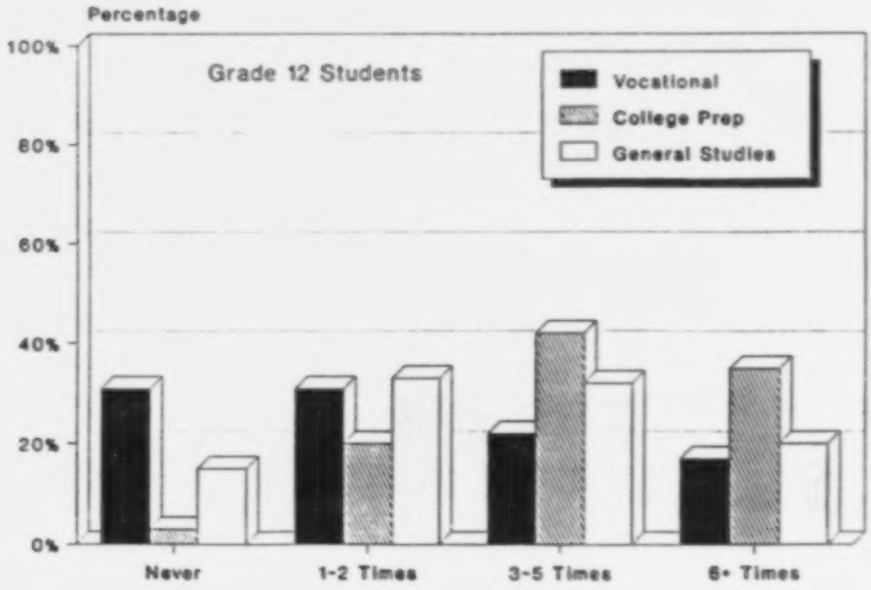
How Often Students Met with High School Guidance Counselor to Discuss Career Plans and Goals

(Between September, 1988 and March, 1989)

How Often	Vocational Students		College Prep Students		General Studies Students	
	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Never	51%	31%	34%	3%	36%	15%
1 - 2 Times	30%	31%	43%	20%	40%	33%
3 - 5 Times	13%	22%	19%	42%	15%	32%
6 or More Times	6%	17%	4%	35%	9%	20%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 5



Differences by Type of Student. College prep students were more likely to have met with their guidance counselor to discuss career plans than either vocational students or general students. As late as grade 12, almost one-third (31%) of vocational students and 15% of general studies students have *never* met with a guidance counselor to discuss career plans. In contrast, only 3% of grade 12 college prep students *never* met with their guidance counselor, and over three-fourths (77%) met with their counselor ***3 or more times***.

The written comments of several students (which are detailed in a later section) confirmed that college prep students are more likely than others to receive assistance from their guidance counselors. Some students believed that counselors were only concerned about helping college prep students and were less interested in helping vocational or general studies students.

School Differences. There were large differences among the 41 schools included in the survey in the frequency with which students met with their high school guidance counselors. The percentage of students who reported that they *never* met with their counselor ranged from 9% to 69% for the 41 schools. The percentage of students who indicated that they met *6 or more times* with their counselor ranged from 7% to 29%.

These differences among schools were not only attributable to school type (vocational or non-vocational). For example, among the vocational schools, the percentage of students who *never* met with their guidance counselor ranged from 12% to 69%. Non-vocational schools also varied; the percentage of students who *never* met with a counselor ranged from 9% to 34%.

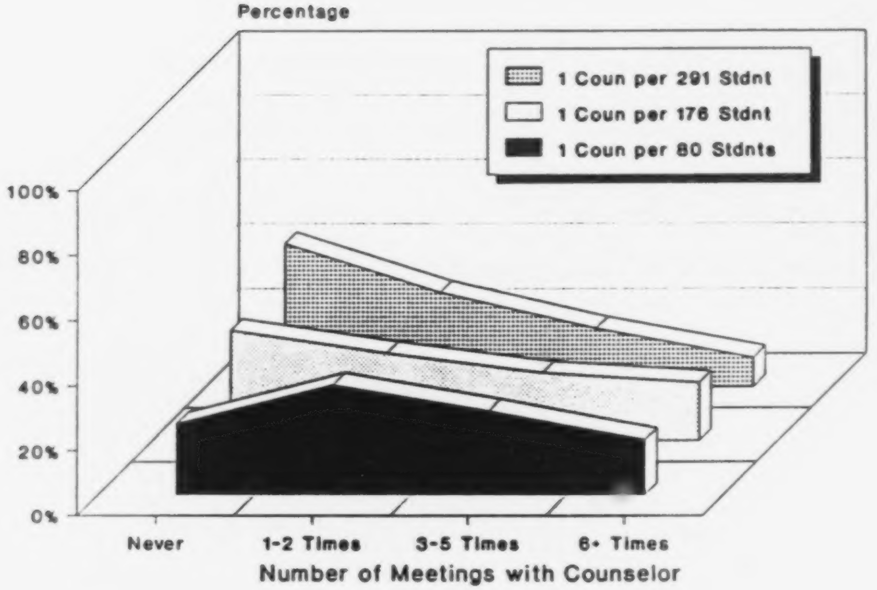
Relation of Guidance Ratio to Number of Visits. Information on the number of full-time equivalent (fte) guidance counselors was available only for school districts, not for individual schools. A rough index of each school's ratio of guidance counselors to students was computed as the number of grade 9-12 students in the district divided by the number of full-time equivalent guidance counselors.

This ratio of guidance counselors to students ranged from 1 counselor per 72 students to 1 counselor per 488 students.

As shown in Figure 6, the ratio of guidance counselors to students was highly related to the number of meetings with a guidance counselors. Not surprisingly, students were more likely to meet

Figure 6

Relationship Between the Ratio of Guidance Counselors to Students and the Number of Meetings With a Guidance Counselor



more often with a guidance counselor in those schools with fewer students per guidance counselor.

Satisfaction With Guidance Services

Students used a four-point scale (*very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, slightly satisfied, not at all satisfied*) to characterize how satisfied they were with the guidance and counseling services provided by their high school. Table 16 and Figure 7 summarize responses.

Overall, less than one-third (29%) of all students were very satisfied with high school guidance services and almost one-fifth (18%) were not at all satisfied.

Although the three types of students were fairly similar in the percentages who were very satisfied with guidance services, there were noteworthy differences in the percentages who were not at all satisfied. Approximately one-fourth of general studies students and one-fifth of vocational students indicated that they were not at all satisfied. In contrast, only one-tenth of college prep students were not at all satisfied.

Factors Related to Satisfaction With Guidance Services. Several analyses examined how variables (school type, student type, grade, number of meetings with guidance counselor, and ratio of guidance counselors to students) individually and in combination were related to satisfaction with guidance services. Two noteworthy findings are that: (a) the number of meetings with the guidance counselor is the single variable most highly related to satisfaction with guidance services, and (b) the ratio of guidance counselors to students is not related to satisfaction.

As shown in Table 17 and Figure 8, the greater the number of meetings with the high school guidance counselor, the higher the level of satisfaction with guidance services. Interestingly, however, half of the students who *never* met with their guidance counselor reported that they were nonetheless *somewhat* or *very satisfied* with guidance services.

But, as illustrated in Figure 9, the ratio of guidance counselors to students was not related to satisfaction with guidance services. This finding suggests that increasing the number of guidance counselors

Table 16

How Satisfied Students Are with High School Guidance Services

How Satisfied	Vocational Students Gr 10	Vocational Students Gr 12	College Prep Students Gr 10	College Prep Students Gr 12	General Studies Students Gr 10	General Studies Students Gr 12
Very	30%	30%	29%	31%	26%	28%
Somewhat	37%	37%	43%	41%	34%	34%
Slightly	15%	15%	15%	19%	14%	15%
Not at All	18%	18%	13%	9%	27%	24%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 7

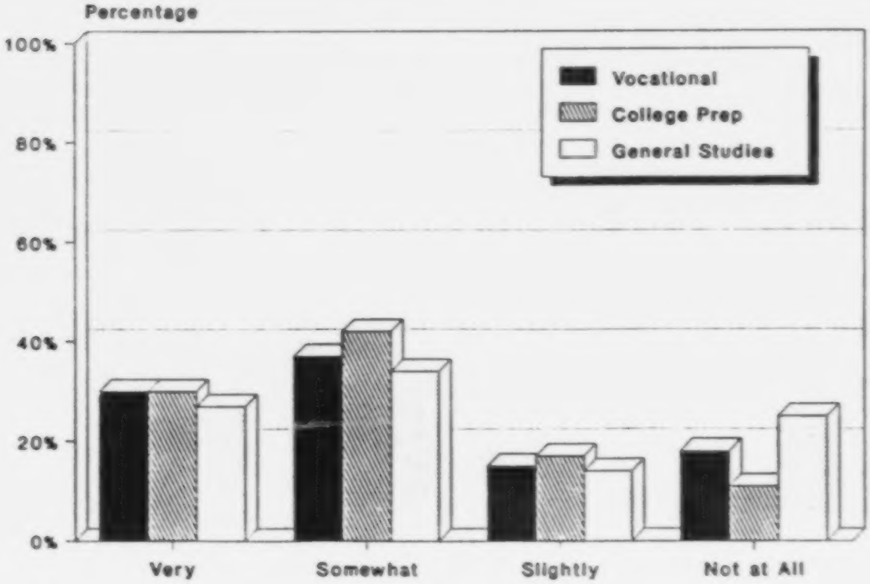


Table 17

Relationship between Number of Times Students Met with High School Guidance Counselor and Satisfaction with High School Guidance Services

	Number of Times Met With Guidance			
How Satisfied	Never	1-2 Times	3-5 Times	6+ Times
Not at All	30%	14%	9%	9%
Slightly	18%	17%	13%	9%
Somewhat	34%	41%	42%	33%
Very	18%	28%	36%	49%

Figure 8

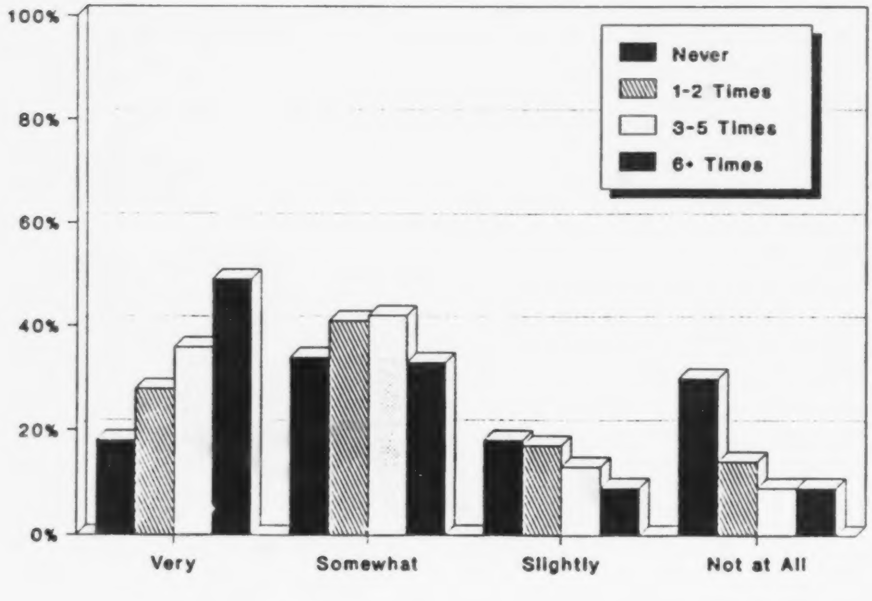
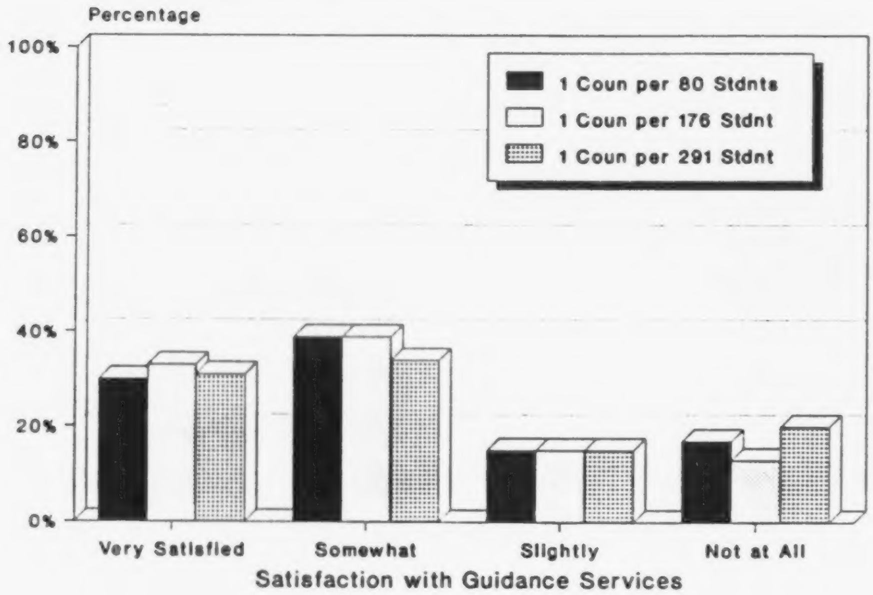


Figure 9

Relationship Between the Ratio of Guidance Counselors to Students and Satisfaction With High School Guidance Services



will not necessarily increase students' satisfaction with guidance services.

Students' written comments provided some additional information about the reasons for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with high school guidance and counseling services.

Students' Written Comments About Guidance Services

Table 18 summarizes the content of 285 written comments about high school guidance. This section includes several examples of these comments.

Vocational Students' Comments

■ Vocational students are not given enough guidance/counselors only care about college prep students.

"I think that the guidance counselors are to busy with the high school so I don't think they bother with Trade. I think we should have our own counselors. The high school counselors do not encourage us to go to college. I think they think were stupid"

"Voke students need better guidance help."

"I wish that the counselors cared about the students that are not attending college as much as the ones who are. And would explain all financial aid opportunity's."

"They should have more counselors to no what the student is doing (my counselor doesn't even know my name)"

"Our guidance department should open-up more to students who are interested in furthering there education, even if not right away. Not much information is released to the general seniors."

"I wish my guidance counselor would at one point and time talk to me! About school work! I only have seen her once and that was to make out this years schedule (Last year!!)"

Table 18

Written Comments About High School Guidance and Counseling Services

Vocational Students	Non-Vocational Students
Vocational students are not given enough guidance; counselors only care about college bound students (17%)	Need counselors that are more competent, less pushy, more understanding (24%)
Counseling services are poor; not helpful (17%)	Counseling services are poor; not helpful (22%)
Need more career guidance and college information (16%)	Counseling services are very good; very helpful (20%)
Counseling services are very good; very helpful (16%)	Counselors should meet with students more frequently (14%)
Need better guidance counselors that are younger, more understanding, less negative (12%)	Counselors only care about college bound students (6%)
Counselors are often not available; scheduling problems (8%)	Counselors are often not available; not accessible (6%)
Counselors do not spend enough time with students (7%)	Counseling services are o.k.; not bad (5%)
Counseling services are o.k.; not bad (4%)	Have never seen a guidance counselor (3%)
Do not need or use high school counseling services (2%)	

Note. Number of comments: Vocational Students = 92; Non-Vocational Students = 193.

"The guidance counselors don't even ask us (in grade 10) what our plans for the future are."

- **Need more career guidance and college information.**

"My guidance counselor did nothing to help me in my goal for college."

"Counselors should take less about grades & sports and more about jobs & life."

"The guidance counselors are not giving enough information to me about college or further vocational schools, and I also feel they do not have enough time to speak with me."

"I wish that someone would help me figure out what college to go to after graduating."

"I think the guidance counselor should talk to you more about your career and not other things."

"I haven't given much thought to what I want to do after school, but I think the guidance counselors here a [School X] could help me."

"The counselors in high school do not make an appointment with you to speak of your future. If you get in trouble that's when you see your counselor. They don't talk about your future and what you can become if you try hard and try different ways or they don't give you any sources. They just talk about the discipline they'll give you if you don't behave."

"More information about outside school careers."

"We should have guidance counselors that cares what students plan to do after school and that discuss different opportunities to them about they careers."

"There is no career planning in this school."

- **Counseling services are poor/not helpful.**

"I think guidance stinks."

"I think the counseling is the weakest of the system. They're nosy and I don't think very professional."

"I don't think the guidance counselors help at all and I think the teachers will get more involved with the kids."

"The guidance counselors don't help you at all."

"Our high school guidance counseling is not good at all."

"The guidance counselors at this school never helped anyone I know at this school. The teachers do a better job with the students than the guidance counselors."

"Don't offer any guidance."

"The guidance counseling sucks. They don't care what us kids do."

- **Guidance services are very good/helpful.**

"My guidance counselor has helped me a great deal. She is currently helping me with a scholarship witch would pay for half of my fees to a 4 year college."

"In my school counseling is the best you can possibly get."

"I have gotten into 6 colleges. My guidance counselor has helped me in all the things I do and if it wasn't for her I'd be lost."

"The counseling here is good for you. And for anyone else who needs it."

"The guidance counseling is really great here. They understand your

problems they help you out alot."

"I feel that the guidance counselors at the school are very helpful and supportive in college decision."

"The guidance counselors at [School X] give good advice about your career and how to obtain your goals."

"My guidance counselor (Mr. [X]) was great."

▪ Need better guidance counselors who are younger, more understanding, less negative.

"We should hire guidance counselors that help students and care about them. They could care less what the students do after graduation."

"My guidance Mr. [X] he is lazy and don't do nothing."

Guidance is very poor. "When I told them I had got into college of my choice the first thing they said was I couldn't do it."

"The guidance counselors do not help you to stay in school. They have nothing good to say."

"Need better guidance counselors."

"We need guidance counselors that are younger that know more about today's problems not these guidance counselor that are over the hill."

"I think the guidance counselors should be a little bit more understanding."

"My guidance counselor has the intelligence of a dead war dog! Guidance counselors seldom represent any guidance toward vocational programs."

"Guidance counselors should not be so negative towards students and future goals!"

"Better guidance with more sympathy all the time."

- **Counselors are often not available/counselors do not spend enough time with students.**

"When you need help with problems they're never there for you. I had problems at home and I needed someone to talk to I had no body to talk. I had to turn to one of my classroom teachers that help me a lot. Please do some work on guidance counselors so the next person will have someone there for them. Thank you."

"We should have an independent survey at our own school. Counselors are never available when you need them."

"I think that the guidance counselors should get more in touch with the students."

"The guidance counselors are never in there office and if they are they tell you they're on break."

"You have to make appointments with your guidance counselor (high school). If someone really has a big problem they can't wait to talk at the guidance counselor's best convenience."

"I'd like to see guidance counselors have more time with the students. My guidance counselors are always taking a lunch break when I go to see them. So they tell me to come back and when I come back he's on another lunch break and this has happened many of times!! It seems they care more about themselves than about the students."

"I don't think guidance counselors spend enough time with the kids."

Non-Vocational Students' Comments

- **Need counselors that are more competent, more understanding, less pushy, less negative**

"The guidance counselling in my high school is awful. They don't take the time for you, nor the energy. I feel the counselors hired were hired because they need the people. I don't feel they are professional enough. If I have a dream and want to fulfill it, my guidance counselor always thought I was wrong. He never wanted to move up to a more challenging level or take a foreign language, or even go to college. I feel the State of Massachusetts should think more on who they choose to be the people who are going to teach us our future."

"I think career guidance and counseling should be more supportive and help people on their way out and on their own. I feel they don't do quite enough."

"I have had bad experiences with counselors being "confidential." In seventh grade I opened up about my teachers, and my counselor told all of them what I said. Since then, one or two word answers is all the counselors get."

"Here in the high school I experienced a few lousy counselors until I found the one I have now. He's the only one very helpful and highly spoken of and really helps and cares. I, along with many others, feel the other counselors are terrible about everything and I think more qualified counselors should be hired in their places. They give poor guidance to the rest of many serious lives."

"I am not happy with the guidance counselors in my school. Through my experiences I found them to be pushy and not too concerned with I wanted to do."

"My guidance counselor is negative against my career goals and doesn't think I can handle hard tasks. She has no confidence in me which causes me to think twice about my decisions. These are the reasons why I don't go to a guidance counselor anymore."

"I don't go to my guidance counselor because I am, quite honestly, afraid of him. He always seems to be in a bad mood. I just don't feel comfortable with that old grouch."

"I don't care for the counselors, you're supposed to be able to talk to them & you really can't"

"I find my G. Counselor to be arrogant & condescending as I was not born in [town X]"

"The guidance counselors in high school are not good at all. They are very pushy and won't let you take the courses you want."

"In high school sometimes guidance counselors undermine a students abilities. Sometimes they don't realize they do it and other times are quite blatant. This is the experience I've had. However, these were only a handful of many. But I feel something should be done about these people whop are like this. I believe it lowers the students self-esteem and teaches them to take the easy way out of everything."

"Guidance counselors have never been the warm, helpful, friendly, and always ready to help me with my problems and college choices. They're very unpersonable."

"Guidance counselors could be better."

"Guidance counselors need to be understanding and patient."

"Guidance Counselors need more info on recommending courses. They mess up your grad. requirements & college acceptance. They don't know what they're doing down there give bad advice."

"The counselors don't really care about the individual."

- **Guidance services are poor/not helpful.**

"I don't think the guidance counselors offer much help at all in choosing a career or a college. They don't care what your interests are."

"The guidance department at my school in my opinion is substandard. They have done nothing for my sister, my friends, or myself. The schedule of classes that I have chosen for freshman and sophomore years have never been met due to the modern 'fail-safe' computerized system of assigning classes. I think that to the guidance department I am just a number."

"The guidance office is very disorganized. They actually missed deadlines on my applications which may keep me out of the colleges I applied to."

"The guidance services at my high school are of little use to me. They do not offer an introduction into selecting future schools or career plans. It seems as though they assume students have already selected career plans and schools. They are helpful if students have made those decisions. Students like myself who are skeptical about their career plans and unsure, find the guidance office to be pressuring students into making a quick decision about their future plans."

"I think the guidance office here is awful, I'm not even sure who the guidance counselors are. We do have a peer-facilitator course but we never hear about it, most people don't even know about it."

"The guidance here is pitiful."

"The guidance office at this school has never encouraged me or helped me find a future career."

"I feel the guidance department could be much better. They don't really enforce you to go on to college or they don't have any comments about it, like it's up to yourself on what you want to do."

"The guidance counseling is terrible here."

"I think that our guidance counselor should take an active interest in career plans and goals. From what I've experienced with my guidance counselor, I've come to the conclusion that he isn't really interested. As for aiding me in deciding what road to take concerning colleges, his participation has been nil."

"I think the guidance department in [School X] is awful. The counselors beat around the bush whey you ask a questions. My counselor is unorganized and always late."

"I think our guidance counselor is lousy & he has not helped me in selecting a college, getting scholarships, etc......"

- **Guidance services are very good/very helpful.**

"My guidance services are great. My counselor is a nice man who I know wants the best for me. He has done a lot for me."

"My guidance helped me a great deal in planning my future. And I appreciate there hard work.

"My guidance counselor is very helpful. He made applying to colleges a lot easier than expected."

"My guidance counselor has helped me alot, he has given me support and he gave me a push in the right direction. He is a very good counselor and has helped me in many ways. He cares about kids and helps them alot, personally and academically. I feel that without his help I would not be going to college, he helped me choose the best colleges and he helped me get the applications in. He helped me be able to further my education."

"The career guidance counselors are very helpful when you need help."

"Career guidance & counseling services - the counselors were very helpful in helping me to determine what career I should pursue and which ones' I shouldn't"

"The guidance basically shows you your choices and doesn't try to force anything on you. They let you make your own decisions, but if you need help, they try to work with you to determine the best path for what you want and need."

" At [School X] I feel our guidance counselors are really concerned about what students are doing and what they plan to do after graduating from high school. They want to help you. For those who don't want to college they are encouraged to get a good job."

"The guidance counselor that I have is very helpful in making and helping me make important decisions like, what classes to take, what to do about SAT's and how to pursue the career I want to. He's been a tremendous help and he will continue to be. It makes me feel confident knowing he's there to guide me."

"The guidance dept. in my school has really helped me during my college application process, the scholarship process and in all other aspects on finding a good school to attend after I graduate from high school"

"Career guidance counseling help you get a start on your future plans and helps in understanding your choices instead of just picking what you want to be and not having enough knowledge on the career."

■ Counselors should meet with students more frequently/should spend more time with students.

"The counseling services provided by our school are terrible. I know several students who haven't even met their counselor yet. I think if more individual attention were given to some students they would find that vocational schools would be beneficial."

"I think the only problem with our guidance department is its always too busy for individual attention."

"When dealing with the guidance in my school I feel the counselor should deal more on a one-to-one basis with each student and therefore know in detail each student."

"In our school I really don't like the way guidance is run. They are always so busy they never have time to help anyone."

"I don't think that the guidance counselors spend enough time trying to help us decide on what classes are right for us. They also don't spend enough time discussing college plans with us. They always have interviews with the freshman, but what about us?"

"I think the guidance department should have more counselors so they

can offer more time for students"

"I think the Guidance counselors should meet with us more often. They never call us just to see if we're doing ok. They don't meet with us to talk about our careers that we might make."

"There should be more guidance one-on-one at certain times of the year."

"I think there should be a better guidance system, the students should meet with them more than 1-2 times a year. They should help you with career planning."

"I feel we should meet more often with guidance counselors."

- **Counselors often are not available/counselors only care about college-bound students**

"Our guidance dept except for the Head of our dept is totally useless. They are never around when you need them & totally unreliable."

"I feel that the guidance is not at all good. You have to have a week appointment, by that time your problem or questions has been solved or answered."

"The guidance services is a joke all they care about or should I say Mr. [X] our counselor is if you are going to a four year college and could care less about those students who are going to a 2-year college. I think he should be fired or he should be talked to. And he should start caring about the other students. As far as I can see if you go to see him about classes and you are not going to a four year college he does not want to be bothered and he gets like has something more important to do. Who did he pay off to get the job?"

"The guidance dept. does not help students who need it. They are only concerned wit the students planning to attend college!"

"I think the guidance at this school is horrible for kids who are not going to go to college. The counselors don't care and they need help."

"High school guidance counselors should get more in touch with ALL their kids not just some."

"Guidance counselors don't take enough time to talk to the students who aren't planning to go to college they spend more time on the kids that are already going. I feel that the Guidance counselors in the high school are more interested and helpful to the student who are in academic classes and plan on attending some great college, than they are with the students who need help in deciding their future and are in the lower level classes."

"Our particular guidance counselor, at this school, is very pre-occupied with only helping college bound students."

Guidance Counselors' Advice About Students' Post High School Plans

One questions in the survey sought information what students' high school guidance counselors had encouraged them to do after completing high school. Students were asked to indicate all of the seven response options that were applicable. Table 19 summarizes the percentage of students who reported that each response option applied to them.

There were noteworthy differences by grade level and by type of student. For all three types of students, grade 10 students were more likely than college prep students to indicate that they have not discussed their post high school plans with a guidance counselor. As late as grade 12, almost half (44%) of vocational students and over one-third (34%) of general studies students have not discussed their post high school plans with a guidance counselor. In contrast, only 12% of grade 12 college prep students have not discussed what they will be doing after high school with their counselor.

The three types of students also differed in the types of recommendations they reported that their counselors made. For college prep students, attending a four-year college was the clear cut, predominant recommendation; 81% of college prep students indicated that their counselors had advised them to pursue further education at a four-year college. For general studies students, the predominant

Table 19

What High School Guidance Counselors Have Encouraged Students to Do After Completing High School

According to Students

Counselors' Advice	Vocational Students		College Prep Students		General Studies Students	
	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Have Not Discussed	67%	44%	46%	12%	57%	34%
2-Year College	11%	27%	10%	21%	22%	46%
4-Year College	11%	18%	49%	81%	20%	26%
Vocational Training	16%	20%	1%	2%	4%	9%
Military	4%	6%	2%	2%	3%	7%
Work Full-Time	13%	20%	2%	3%	5%	15%
Work Part-Time	5%	7%	6%	12%	3%	11%

Notes. Students were instructed to "check all that apply."
Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

recommendation by counselors was to attend a two-year college (46%). For vocational students, no one activity emerged as the clear cut recommendation; 27% of grade 12 vocational students reported that their counselor recommended attending a two-year college, 20% indicated that further vocational was recommended by their counselor, and 20% reported that seeking full-time employment was their counselor's advice.

Is High School Like Students Thought It Would Be?

Students used one of four response categories (*yes; no, it's worse; no, it's better; not sure*) to report whether high school has turned out to be what they thought it would be like when they were in junior high school. Table 20 and Figure 10 summarize students' responses.

Overall, less than half of the students indicated that high school was what they thought it would be like. College prep students (49%) were more likely than vocational students (37%) or general studies students (37%) to report that high school turned out to be what they thought it would be like. But, vocational students (30%) were more likely than either college prep (22%) or general studies students (18%) to indicate that high school was *better* than they anticipated. General studies students (25%) were more likely than college prep (13%) and vocational students (16%) to report that high school was *worse* than they believed it would be.

Considered Dropping Out?/High School Program Helped?

Students used a three-point scale (*yes, no, not sure*) to report whether they have ever seriously considered dropping out of high. As a follow-up questions, those vocational students who have considered dropping out were asked if being enrolled in a vocational program instead of a non-vocational program helped them stay in school. Those non-vocational students who have considered dropping out were asked if being enrolled in a non-vocational instead of a vocational program helped them stay in school. Tables 21 and 22 and Figures 11 and 12 summarize responses to these two questions.

One-fourth (25%) of vocational students and over one-fourth (27%) of general studies students reported that they have seriously considered dropping out of high school. In contrast, only 7% of the college

Table 20

Has High School Turned Out to be What Students Thought it Would be Like When They Were in Junior High School?

HS Like Thought?	Vocational Students Gr 10	Vocational Students Gr 12	College Prep Students Gr 10	College Prep Students Gr 12	General Studies Students Gr 10	General Studies Students Gr 12
Yes	37%	37%	47%	49%	36%	37%
No, it's worse	17%	16%	14%	12%	28%	21%
No, it's better	28%	31%	24%	20%	18%	18%
Not sure	18%	16%	15%	19%	18%	23%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 10

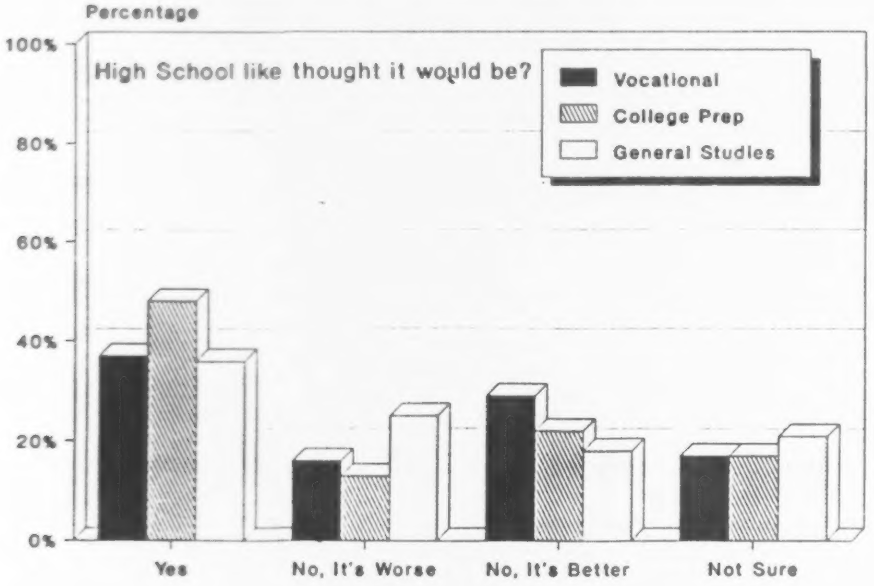


Table 21

Have Students Ever Seriously Considered Dropping Out of High School?

	Vocational Students		**College Prep Students**		**General Studies Students**	
Considered Dropping Out?	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Yes	24%	25%	7%	7%	28%	27%
No	65%	67%	89%	91%	63%	69%
Not Sure	11%	9%	4%	2%	8%	4%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 11

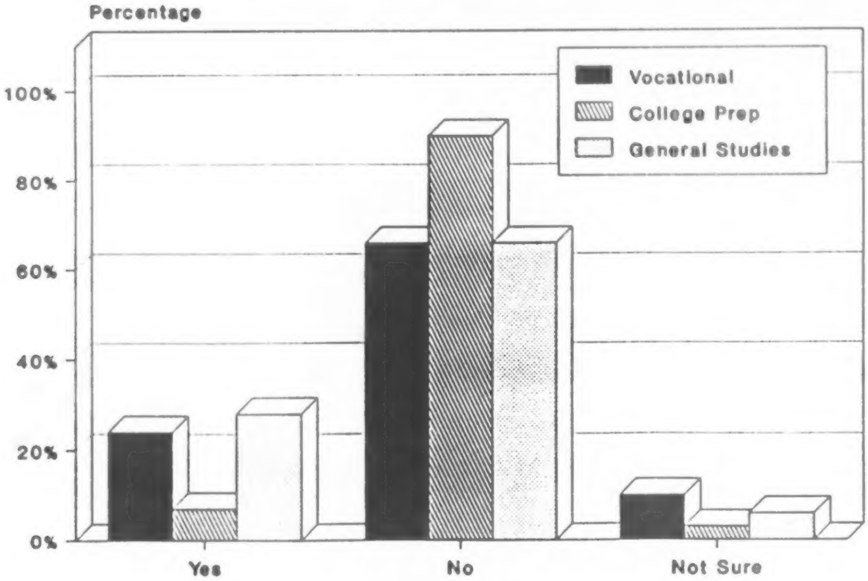


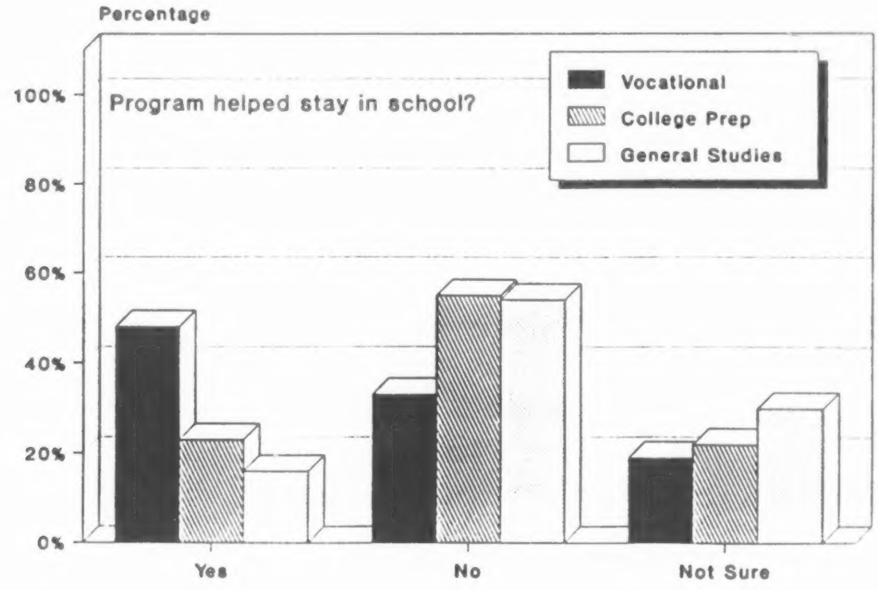
Table 22

Has Vocational Education Helped Potential Vocational Student Dropouts Remain in School? Have Non-Vocational Education Programs Helped Potential Non-Vocational Student Dropouts Remain in School?

	Vocational Students		College Prep Students		General Studies Students	
Program Helped?	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Yes	45%	52%	20%	26%	16%	16%
No	33%	33%	53%	60%	43%	64%
Not Sure	22%	15%	27%	14%	41%	20%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 248 and grade 12 = 223; College Prep, grade 10 = 36 and grade 12 = 33; General Studies, grade 10 = 54 and grade 12 = 67.

Figure 12



prep students indicated that they have thought about dropping out of high school.

Although vocational students and general studies students were equally likely to have considered dropping out, potential vocational student dropouts were over 3 times as likely as potential general studies dropouts to indicate that their high school program helped them remain in school. Over half (52%) of grade 12 vocational students who considered dropping out reported that being enrolled in a vocational program instead of a non-vocational program helped them stay in school. In contrast, only 16% of the general studies students who have considered dropping out said that being enrolled in a non-vocational program instead of a vocational program helped them stay in school.

Would Students Still Enroll in Same Type of High School Program?

Vocational students were asked if they would still enroll in a vocational education program instead of a non-vocational program if they had it to do all over again. Non-vocational students were asked if they would still enroll in a non-vocational education program instead of a vocational program if they had it to do all over again. As a follow-up question, those students who said they would not enroll in the same type of high school program were asked their reasons for not wanting to enroll in the same program. Tables 23 and 24 summarize this information.

College prep and vocational students were much more likely than general studies students to indicate that they would enroll in the same type of high school program if they had the decision to make all over again. Over three-fourths (77%) of grade 12 vocational students and 87% of grade 12 college prep students said they would choose the same type of high school program. In contrast, only half (53%) of the grade 12 general studies students indicated that they would choose a non-vocational program instead of a vocational program if they had it to do all over again.

For those vocational students who would not re-enroll in a vocational program, the predominant reasons given were that a college prep program would have helped them more or provided better academics and they did not like the vocational program.

For those college prep students and those general studies students who said they would not choose a non-vocational program if they had it to do all over again, their predominant reasons were that they want to learn a trade/occupational skills and they did not like the non-vocational program.

Table 23

If Students "Had It To Do All Over Again," Would They Still Enroll in the Same Type of High School Program (Vocational or Non-Vocational)?

	Vocational Students		**College Prep Students**		**General Studies Students**	
Enroll in Same Program?	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Yes	76%	77%	83%	87%	61%	53%
No	8%	10%	7%	6%	16%	21%
Not Sure	16%	13%	10%	7%	23%	26%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Table 24

Reasons Students Would NOT Still Enroll in the Same Type of High School Program (Vocational or Non-Vocational) If They "Had It To Do All Over Again"

VOCATIONAL STUDENTS	
▪ College prep would have helped more; better academics	31%
▪ Do not like it; not what expected	21%
▪ School is no good	13%
▪ Have doubts about career or program	8%
▪ Social part of school is lacking; not enough girls	6%
▪ No sports; no football team	4%
▪ Not challenging enough	2%
COLLEGE PREP STUDENTS	
▪ Want to learn a trade; occupational skills	60%
▪ Do not like it; not what expected	13%
▪ Was too young to decide	7%
▪ Want to try something different	3%
▪ Not challenging enough	3%
GENERAL STUDIES STUDENTS	
▪ Want to learn a trade; occupational skills	62%
▪ Do not like it; not what expected	26%
▪ School is no good	6%
▪ Wanted to; felt like it	9%

Note. Number of students: Vocational = 125; College Prep = 30; General Studies = 47.

Results: Career Plans and Post High School Plans

Five survey questions covered students' career plans and plans when they complete high school: whether students have decided on career area, when students decided on a career area, when students decided on a career, what careers students plan to pursue, what students plan to do after completing high school, and what students' parents have encouraged them to do after high school.

Have Students Decided on Career?

Students used a three-point scale (*yes, no, not sure*) to indicate whether they have decided on a career area they want to pursue. Table 25 and Figure 13 summarize students' responses.

Not surprisingly, grade 12 students were more likely than grade 10 students to report that they have decided on a career area. At both grade levels, vocational students were more likely than either college prep or general studies students to have decided on a career area.

What Careers Have Students Chosen?

Those students who have decided on a career were asked to list the career area they have chosen. Table 26 gives the percentages of college prep and general studies students who reported each of 54 career areas.

For college prep students, the ten career areas most frequently listed were:

- Business administration/management
- Education/teaching
- Lawyer
- Psychology
- Engineering
- Medical doctor
- Accounting

Table 25

Have Students Decided on Career Area They Want to Pursue?

Decided on Career?	Vocational Students Gr 10	Vocational Students Gr 12	College Prep Students Gr 10	College Prep Students Gr 12	General Studies Students Gr 10	General Studies Students Gr 12
Yes	67%	72%	50%	64%	46%	54%
No	9%	6%	17%	9%	22%	12%
Not Sure	24%	22%	33%	27%	32%	34%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 1,038 and grade 12 = 917; College Prep, grade 10 = 546 and grade 12 = 505; General Studies, grade 10 = 193 and grade 12 = 256.

Figure 13

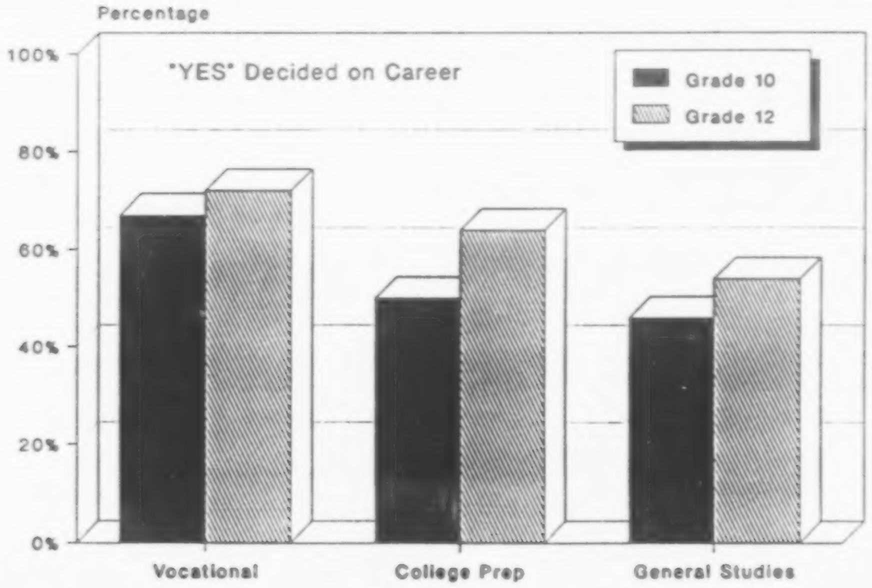


Table 26

Career Areas Identified by Non-Vocational Students

Career Area	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Accounting	3.8%	7.7%
Advertising	1.3%	0.4%
Agriculture	0.5%	0.9%
Architecture	1.9%	0.0%
Art	2.2%	1.7%
Automotive	0.2%	3.4%
Aviation	2.8%	2.6%
Biological Sciences	2.4%	0.0%
Business Admin/Mgt	11.3%	8.1%
Child Care	1.1%	3.4%
Computer Technology	3.0%	1.3%
Commercial Art	2.2%	0.9%
Communications	2.5%	2.6%
Construction	0.9%	4.7%
Cosmetology	1.3%	7.7%
Dental Assisting	0.3%	0.0%
Dentistry	0.2%	0.0%
Economics	0.5%	0.0%
Electronics	0.2%	0.0%
Education/Teaching	6.7%	3.8%
Engineering	6.3%	0.4%
English	0.3%	0.0%
Entertainment	1.3%	1.7%
Fashion Merchandising	2.0%	1.3%
Finance/Banking	0.8%	0.0%
Food Services	0.3%	2.6%
Foreign Languages	0.3%	0.4%
Health Professions	0.5%	0.0%
Hotel-Restaurant Mgt	1.3%	2.1%

Note. Number of students: College Prep = 599; General Studies = 229.

Table 26 (continued)

Career Areas Identified by Non-Vocational Students

Career Area	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Interior Design	0.5%	0.9%
Journalism	2.2%	0.9%
Laborer	0.0%	0.4%
Law Enforcement	1.4%	5.1%
Lawyer	6.6%	4.7%
Mathematics	0.6%	0.0%
Medical Assistant	0.3%	0.0%
Medical Doctor	4.2%	0.4%
Medical Technician	0.6%	0.9%
Military	2.0%	3.0%
Music	2.4%	3.0%
Nursing	1.3%	2.1%
Physical Education	0.6%	0.4%
Physical Therapy	1.4%	0.0%
Politics/Government Service	1.6%	0.0%
Psychology	6.4%	0.9%
Public Relations	0.2%	0.0%
Religious Studies	0.0%	0.9%
Sales/Marketing	0.6%	0.9%
Secretarial	1.7%	7.7%
Social Work	1.6%	0.4%
Sports	0.8%	2.1%
Theatre/Drama	0.9%	0.9%
Transportation/Travel	1.3%	1.3%
Veterinary Medicine	1.9%	0.4%
Other	0.8%	5.5%

Note. Number of students: College Prep = 599; General Studies = 229.

- Computer technology
- Aviation
- Communications

For general studies students who have decided on a career, the top ten career areas were:

- Business administration/management
- Cosmetology
- Accounting
- Secretarial
- Law enforcement
- Construction
- Lawyer
- Education/teaching
- Child care
- Automotive

Interestingly, for at least four of these ten career areas (cosmetology, construction, child care, automotive) state-approved Chapter 74 vocational program are offered in high schools in Massachusetts.

For vocational students, the match between their vocational program area and their career area was determined. For example, a student in a computer programming training program who indicated that she wanted to pursue a career as a cosmetologist was considered to have chosen a career not related to her training. Overall, 85% of the vocational students who have decided on a career have chosen a career area related to their vocational training. Table 27 details the percentage of students in each vocational program included in the study that reported a training-related career.

When Students Decided on Career

Those students who have decided on a career area used one of six response categories (6th grade or earlier, 7th or 8th grade, 9th or 10th grade, 11th grade, 12th grade, Don't know) to report when they decided on the career area they plan to pursue. Table 28 summarizes this information.

Two noteworthy findings can be found in the responses of grade 12 students. First, for a substantial number of students, the decision

Table 27

Are Vocational Students' Chosen Career Areas Related to Their Vocational Training?

Vocational Program Area	Career Area Related to Training	Career NOT Related to Training
Electronics	81%	19%
Auto Mechanics	92%	8%
Electrician	96%	4%
Welding	100%	0%
Painting & Decorating	88%	12%
Machine Tool/Shop	76%	24%
Community Health Work	67%	33%
Dental Assisting	92%	8%
Auto Body Repair	77%	23%
Computer Programming	71%	29%
Cosmetology	92%	8%
Nursing Assisting	88%	12%
Food Production & Mgt	73%	27%
Graphic & Printing Commun	71%	29%
Plumbing	96%	4%
Retailing	49%	51%
Cabinetmaking	80%	20%
Clothing Prod & Mgt	100%	0%
Drafting	92%	8%
Commercial Art	84%	16%
Child Care	53%	47%
Horticulture	57%	43%
Carpentry	94%	6%

Note. Number of students reporting careers: Vocational = 1,349.

Table 28

When Students Decided on Career

When Decided	**Vocational Students** Gr 10	Gr 12	**College Prep Students** Gr 10	Gr 12	**General Studies Students** Gr 10	Gr 12
6th Grade or Earlier	12%	7%	13%	9%	11%	7%
7th or 8th Grade	28%	19%	27%	5%	21%	8%
9th or 10th Grade	53%	38%	54%	26%	61%	27%
11th Grade	0%	16%	0%	29%	0%	23%
12th Grade	0%	17%	0%	25%	0%	27%
Don't Know	5%	3%	6%	6%	7%	8%

Note. Number of students: Vocational, grade 10 = 712 and grade 12 = 670; College Prep, grade 10 = 301 and grade 12 = 343; General Studies, grade 10 = 97 and grade 12 = 150.

about a career area is occurring as late as grades 11 and 12. One-third (33%) of vocational students, 54% of college prep students and 50% of general studies students who have decided on a career did so in grades 11 or 12.

Second, vocational students were more likely than college prep or general studies students to have decided on a career area before grade 11. Almost two-thirds (64%) of grade 12 vocational students versus 40% of college prep and 42% of general studies students who have decided on a career area decided on this career area before grade 11.

Students' Plans After Completing High School/What Parents Have Encouraged Students to Do After High School

In two related questions, students were asked what they plan to do after completing high school and what their parents have encouraged them to do after completing high school. Students were instructed to "check all answers that apply" from seven listed responses: attend a two-year college, attend a four-year college, pursue vocational training, enter the military, work full-time, work part-time, and don't know/we have not discussed it. Table 29 summarizes students' responses to these two questions.

There were noteworthy differences by grade level and by type of student. Grade 10 students were 2 to 3 times as likely as grade 12 students to report that they did not know what they planned to do after high school and that they have not discussed their plans after high school with their parents. For example, 30% of grade 10 general studies students versus 16% of grade 12 general studies students indicated that they "don't know" what they plan to do after completing high school.

Vocational and general studies students were substantially more likely than college prep students to indicate that they do not know their post high school plans and that they have not discussed their plans with their parents. As late as grade 12, 16% of general studies students and 11% of vocational students versus only 3% of college prep students do not know what they will do after completing high school. In addition, 15% of grade 12 vocational students and 11% of general studies students compared to only 2% of grade 12 college prep students have not discussed their plans after high school with their parents.

The three types of students also differed substantially in their chosen post high school plans and their parents' recommendations. For grade 12 college prep students, not surprisingly, attending a 4-year college was the clear cut, predominant activity chosen by students (81%) and recommended by their parents (87%). For grade 12 general studies students, attending a 2-year college was the most frequently indicated activity (42%). For grade 12 vocational students, working full-time was the activity cited most often (54%).

There were more likely to be discrepancies between students' choices and their parents' recommendations for vocational and general studies students than for college prep students. For example, 16% of grade 12 general studies students indicated they plan to attend a 4-year college; in contrast, 37% of these students reported that their parents had encouraged them to attend a 4-year college. Similarly, 22% of grade 12 vocational students plan to attend a 2-year college, but 33% of vocational students indicated that their parents had recommended attending a 2-year college.

Table 29

Students' Plans After Completing High School

Students' Plans	Vocational Students		College Prep Students		General Studies Students	
	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Don't Know	20%	11%	9%	3%	30%	16%
2-Year College	17%	22%	11%	16%	26%	42%
4-Year College	15%	13%	78%	81%	24%	16%
Vocational Training	22%	20%	3%	2%	8%	11%
Military	11%	7%	6%	4%	10%	6%
Work Full-Time	38%	54%	6%	7%	22%	30%
Work Part-Time	14%	12%	26%	28%	11%	22%

What Parents Have Encouraged Students to Do After High School

According to Students

Parents' Advice	Vocational Students		College Prep Students		General Studies Students	
	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12	Gr 10	Gr 12
Have Not Discussed	29%	15%	9%	2%	28%	11%
2-Year College	22%	33%	17%	19%	29%	50%
4-Year College	22%	23%	83%	87%	39%	37%
Vocational Training	29%	33%	3%	2%	7%	14%
Military	11%	12%	7%	6%	14%	14%
Work Full-Time	38%	48%	9%	10%	18%	32%
Work Part-Time	14%	13%	22%	28%	15%	22%

Results: Opinions About Vocational-Technical Education

Some questions in the survey provided indirect evidence about students' attitudes toward vocational education, for example, their perceptions of the reasons students choose to enroll in vocational education. In addition, one question in the survey directly asked students whether they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about vocational education programs offered in Massachusetts high schools. Students were also asked to indicate whether nine other groups of people with whom they associate or who are likely to influence their futures (parents, friends, junior high guidance, junior high teachers, siblings, high school teachers, general public, employers, and college professors) have favorable or unfavorable opinions about vocational education programs.

In addition to these ratings, written comments about vocational education were provided by 607 students. Table 30 summarizes students' ratings of opinion about vocational education and Table 31 describes the major themes about vocational education found in students' written comments.

Opinion: Parents

Most (90%) of the vocational students indicated that their parents have a favorable opinion about vocational education; only 10% reported that their parents have an unfavorable opinion. For at least some parents, their opinion about vocational education became favorable only *after* the student had enrolled in vocational; some parents initially disagreed with the students' decision to enroll in vocational education. As one student commented,

> *"My parents weren't happy when I told them I wanted to attend a voc h.s. I enrolled as a sophomore because of their opinion. I do well now and their opinion has changed for the better. The reputation of the schools (voc. schools) is not good. I think that affected my parents' opinion."*

College prep students were evenly divided in their perceptions of their parents' opinions; 51% indicated that their parents have a fa

Table 30

People's Opinions About Vocational Education in Massachusetts

According to Students

Person(s)	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Your Parents			
Favorable	90%	51%	60%
Unfavorable	10%	49%	40%
Your Friends			
Favorable	76%	31%	46%
Unfavorable	24%	69%	54%
You (Student)			
Favorable	94%	51%	59%
Unfavorable	6%	49%	41%
Junior High School Teachers			
Favorable	65%	51%	55%
Unfavorable	35%	49%	45%
Junior High School Guidance			
Favorable	69%	59%	58%
Unfavorable	31%	41%	42%

Note. Excludes "Don't Know" responses.

Table 30 (continued)

People's Opinions About Vocational Education in Massachusetts
According to Students

Person(s)	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Brothers and Sisters			
Favorable	81%	38%	47%
Unfavorable	19%	62%	53%
Your High School Teachers			
Favorable	83%	44%	51%
Unfavorable	17%	56%	49%
General Public in Massachusetts			
Favorable	58%	33%	46%
Unfavorable	42%	67%	54%
Employers in Massachusetts			
Favorable	80%	68%	63%
Unfavorable	20%	32%	37%
College Professors			
Favorable	46%	16%	28%
Unfavorable	54%	84%	72%

Note. Excludes "Don't Know" responses.

vorable opinion about vocational education and 49% reported that their parents' opinion is unfavorable.

General studies students as a group, viewed their parents' opinions as somewhat more favorable than unfavorable; 60% said their parents' opinion was favorable and 40% indicated that their parents' opinion was unfavorable.

Opinion: Friends

Over three-fourths (76%) of the vocational students perceived their friends' opinions about vocational education to be favorable, but 24% indicated that their friends' opinions are unfavorable.

In contrast, college prep students were more than twice as likely to report that their friends have an unfavorable opinion (69%) as they were to indicate that their friends have a favorable opinion (31%). General studies students perceived their friends' opinion about vocational education as only somewhat more unfavorable (54%) than favorable (46%).

For all three types of students (vocational, college prep, and general studies) between one-fourth to over two-thirds reported that their friends have an unfavorable opinion about vocational education. Although students indicated elsewhere in the survey that their friends were not very important in their decision to enroll in vocational or non-vocational education, friends were identified as one of the key sources of information about high school. Because their friends' unfavorable opinions about vocational education are likely to color the types of information about high school that they share with students, vocational educators need to be concerned that positive information about vocational education is conveyed to all students, not just those students who are likely to enroll in vocational programs.

Opinion: Junior High School Teachers

Two-thirds (65%) of vocational students believed that their junior high or middle school teachers have a favorable opinion about vocational education, and about one-third (35%) reported that these teachers have an unfavorable opinion.

College prep students were equally divided in their assessment of the opinions of their junior high teachers; 51% viewed their teachers' opinions as favorable and 49% reported that their teachers' opinions about vocational education are unfavorable.

Over half (55%) of general studies students indicated that their junior high teachers' opinions are favorable; a slightly smaller percentage (45%) viewed their junior high teachers' opinions as unfavorable.

Opinion: Junior High School Guidance Counselor

Two-thirds (69%) of vocational students reported that their junior high school guidance counselors have a favorable opinion about vocational education. Almost three-fifths of college prep students (59%) and general studies students (58%) also indicated that junior high counselors have a positive opinion about vocational education.

Although all three types of students perceived the opinions of their junior high school guidance counselors as more likely to be favorable than unfavorable, over one-third of all students reported that their junior high guidance counselors' opinions about vocational education are unfavorable. And, as described earlier in this report, the written comments of some students indicated that some junior high counselors do not merely not encourage students to enroll in vocational education, they actively discourage students from doing so.

Given that junior high guidance counselors were identified by students as one of the main sources of information about high school, vocational educators need to ensure that junior high guidance personnel are fully aware of the positive aspects of vocational education programs.

Opinion: Brothers and Sisters

Vocational students overwhelmingly perceived the opinions of their siblings as more likely to be favorable (81%) than unfavorable (19%). In contrast, only 38% of college prep students indicated that their sibling hold favorable opinions about vocational education. General studies students were about equally divided in their assessments; 47% reported that their siblings have favorable opinions and

53% indicated that their siblings' opinions are unfavorable.

Opinion: High School Teachers

Not surprisingly, most (83%) of the vocational students believed that their high school teachers have a favorable opinion about vocational education. College prep students perceived their high school teachers' opinions as less favorable, and general studies students were equally divided in their assessments.

Opinion: General Public in Massachusetts

All three types of students believe that a substantial segment of the general public in Massachusetts holds unfavorable opinions about vocational education.

Only about half (58%) of the vocational students perceived the opinions of the general public in Massachusetts about vocational education to be favorable. Only one-third (33%) of college prep students and less than half (46%) of general studies students rated the opinions of the general public as favorable.

Opinion: Employers in Massachusetts

All three types of students concur that employers are more likely to have favorable opinions about vocational education than unfavorable opinions. Vocational students were four times more likely to indicate that employers' opinions are favorable (80%) than unfavorable (20%). And, over two-thirds (68%) of college prep students and almost two-thirds (63%) of general studies students believed that employers' opinions of vocational education programs are favorable.

Opinion: College Professors in Massachusetts

Almost half (46%) of the vocational students indicated that college professors have favorable opinions about vocational education. In contrast, college prep and general studies students overwhelmingly perceived college professors' opinions about vocational education to be unfavorable; 84% of college prep and 72% of the general studies students rated college professors' opinions as unfavorable.

This finding, coupled with the written comments of non-vocational students, highlights one of the barriers to enrolling in vocational education for non-vocational students: the perception that a vocational education limits students' chances of success in college.

Opinion: You (Student)

Most (94%) of the vocational students view vocational education favorably. College prep students are about evenly divided; 51% hold favorable opinions about vocational education and 49% have unfavorable opinions. General studies students are somewhat more positive about vocational education than college prep students; 59% have favorable opinions and 41% rated their opinion as unfavorable.

Students' written comments shed further light on the nature of their positive or negative opinions about vocational education.

Written Comments About Vocational-Technical Education

Table 31 summarizes the major themes that emerged from the 607 written comments about vocational education. This section includes several examples of students' comments

Table 31

Written Comments About Vocational Education

Vocational Students	Non-Vocational Students
▪ Vocational education provides excellent preparation for the world of work or for further education (33%)	▪ Vocational education is an easy way out for lazy students/way to avoid academics (19%)
▪ Vocational education is great; awesome (22%)	▪ Vocational programs are for students who want to learn a trade; non-vocational programs are for students who want to go to college (17%)
▪ People have the wrong idea about vocational education; the image of vocational education needs to be improved (16%)	▪ Vocational education is a good option for some students; vocational education is beneficial (14%)
▪ Vocational schools are too strict; school policies are unfair; some teachers are not good (8%)	▪ Non-vocational programs provide a better education than vocational programs do (14%)
▪ Vocational programs are better than non-vocational programs (5%)	▪ Vocational programs are for losers and drug abusers (14%)
▪ Vocational education helped student stay in school, improve grades and attitude toward school (4%)	▪ Not interested in vocational education; vocational education not appropriate for career goals (12%)
▪ There should be more or better academic courses in vocational programs (4%)	▪ The bad reputation of vocational programs prevents students from enrolling in vocational programs (11%)
▪ Vocational instructors are very good (4%)	

Note. Number of comments: Vocational Students = 370; Non-Vocational Students = 237.

Vocational Students' Comments

- **Vocational education provides excellent preparation for the world of work or for further education:**

"I'm glad I came to (School X) because I'll be ready for the real world and when I get out of high I would have a good paying job. Non Voc. schools students if they don't go to college they end up working at $4.00/hr. or so when we'll be starting at about $8.00/hr. We'll have real jobs instead of Burger King or Big Y."

"I think that the program prepares you for solving problems after school and saves you trouble in doing tasks."

"Many kids don't get a chance to go to college and be scholars. Vocational careers give them a chance to better themselves in the future and have pride in what they can do. Vocational careers are beautiful. There like an art and without the art and beauty in the world it would be a pretty bad place."

" A vocational school is a very good place to attend school if you know or want to experience in a career. A vocational school offers you the training & knowledge you need to pursue your career. You can attend college after graduation from a vocational school. Vocational schools offer so much for those who want it."

"I think vocational training is a very good move for building a career."

"Excellent training for the workers of tomorrow!"

"I feel vocational schools give teenagers a chance to learn a trade and get a better chance to get a good paying, good job. I think there should be more technical & vocational schools in Massachusetts."

"Enrolling in a voc school was the best thing I could have done to reach my goals that I have set in life."

"Vocational education provides excellent learning ability through textbook and hands on training. If somewhere down the line I have children I'd feel good about them going to a vocational school."

"I think that there should be more vocational schools around. Because they help you into finding a career, and help you into knowing the working world."

"I think that the vocational education program is a great idea. There are some idiots in this school, but most of them give it all they got. I am not a good student in academics but you put a screwdriver or pliers in anyones' hand in this school and they can fix anything."

"My class helps kids build their confidence and character."

"In junior/senior nonvocational high schools, you learn laws and theory's. Anyone can memorize laws & theory's. But in a vocational school, they teach you & you get hands on experience so you are more prepared for work after school. Here they encourage you to set your own goals and work for them, at non-vocational high schools they encourage you to meet the goals set by them."

"I think that vocational schools offer you a great education. I am fully satisfied. The school offers courses that meet all standard to be able to attend a college if you choose to."

"I like the trades and the education is excellent. They give you good opportunities to get good paying jobs."

"I have enjoyed my education at the vocational school I have attended. Without my vocational education I would be afraid of entering the world with the fear of being a failure. I know with my education background I am going to be something!"

"(X) Tech is very good for teaching the hands on training that you would need for working in the real world."

"Vocational education is good to teach responsibility & what work life will be after school."

- **Vocational education/vocational schools are great**

"I think vocational schools are the best thing that ever happened to the

Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

"I feel vocational education is great. I love it and try to encourage others about the programs available for them."

"(X) Tech is an awesome school!!"

"I think vocational education is good and there should be more vocational schools in Mass."

"Vokies rule!"

"I enjoy going to the vocational school. I suggest to everyone thinking about attending vocational to go with it and enjoy it because I love it."

"I think the vocational education is great and learned a lot and if I had to do it all over again I would because I made a lot of new friends."

"I'm glad I didn't let the rumors about vocational schools change my mind because they are not true and I love my school. I also give it alot of credit and thanks."

"Great!! #1"

"Vocational is pretty cool and is a learning experience. I would suggest anyone to come into vocational."

"I think that the vocational high school is the best thing that has happened to me and to a lot of other students here."

"I love attending a vocational high school."

"I would not enter into any other school, but [School X]. This school has given me a lot to look forward to in the future."

" I regret the 2 years I missed in Trade. I went to the high school for two years, then switched. It was the best move I have made in my life yet. I love Trade."

"It's pretty cool."

"I love my school, I'd do it all over again.

"Its awesome!"

▪ People have the wrong idea about vocational education; the image of vocational education needs to be improved.

" I think vocational education has got the wrong end of the deal. Many people don't let their kids come here because they think this is a "stupid persons school" Its not! Our school has a very good academic program I feel. We work just as hard as people at [Non-Voc] High. We have 2 periods of math and English instead of just one. I think the opinions about voc-ed must change or people who need to go here won't be able to."

"I feel that one of the reasons vocational education has a bad reputation is because most people/students that are enrolled in a non-voc are not aware of the true situation in a vocational school. I feel that awareness should be broadened!"

"More publicity. Work for a favorable reputation."

"Vocational education is in most cases viewed as a way for uneducated or stupid kids to graduate high school. And that is not true in most cases. There are some very smart kids in vocational high schools."

"The general public should also be brought up to date on what vocational schools are doing and not on rumors of it being a dumping ground."

"I feel that people are misinformed about voc. schools. They always say its a drugie school. They say you can't go to college, etc. Its not true. It makes me mad that good voc schools get a bad rep when people don't know what there talking about!"

"Too many people think if you go to a vocational school you're a looser and you can't go to college."

"I think everyone who is against Voc. Ed or thinks it's an easy way out should try it for at least a week. Then they'll realize that it's not for dummies or druggies but it's for serious students looking to pursue a trade. We work just as hard or harder than a regular high school. We juggle a heavy academic schedule & a tough practical shop cur-

riculum."

"I feel the reason no one is interested in voc schools is they have a bad reputation, not only for drugs and all the bad kids but people feel they would get a better education in a normal high school. They need to be made to realize the opportunities in a voc school. In my shop, drafting there are so few students it's not funny. But then again more parents have realized they missed something in high school, so our number of post graduates is great! They realized the mistake of not going to a voc school. Now all we have to do is make jr. high kids realize it before they make the mistake too!"

"In junior high, students think this is a druggy school. This school has the same problems as any other school. If something happens here, people will recognize it more than there public high school."

"I think vocational education should have a better image, because it isn't what lots of people think. It prepares you for later jobs and offers job co-op program."

"Most people that has not even been inside to look around in a vocational school think that punks, juveniles, and bad kids, go to them. That not the case. Just because half of them are below average on income, you shouldn't judge a book by its cover and the public should start realizing that."

"I believe vocational education is underrated and not look at fairly."

"I believe vocational schooling is better than people who go or have gone to non-vocational schools say they are. We are not stupid because we chose to enter a vocational school. We are just as smart or even smarter than they are."

■ Vocational schools are too strict; school policies are unfair; some teachers are not good

"The new dean Mr. [Z] is to strict he yells if you are late to school. And when you turn 18 you still can not dismiss yourself"

"I think that the attendance program is inappropriate, it should not

matter how many times you are absent, as long as your grades are good."

"The teachers sometimes are too strict and often spend time with one student rather than the class overall."

"I think the high school I go to has a lot of problems to work out. They do not treat the students fairly. And sometimes lie to get students so frustrated that they want to quit. I think the school system is corrupted. No one cares about the students anymore."

"I have just bad comments, the guidance counselors don't help us the way we'd like them to, they only care what the teachers say, not the student or the parents and we have no half days like all the other schools do they have at least a day month we only have 1 a year! Its like a prison here!!!"

"I hate voc. education"

"They make this place more of a discipline place than a school it makes the kid hate the place I think they have to many rules and punishments."

"Should not be so strict."

"Get a new electrical wiring teacher. He's to old fool. Everybody hates him! You ask him a question, and he laughs, and says don't waste my time."

"Vo tech teachers are actually very stupid although there are a few who know what they are doing. The people who make up the curriculum for the academic classes think that everyone here is working at a third grade learning level."

"Teachers have bad attitudes."

- **Vocational programs are better than non-vocational programs**

"Vocational education is the best form of education for everyone. I compare my curriculum with that of my regular high school friends,

and I am far ahead of them. Also, several of them have chosen to be post-graduates here next year. Vocational education gives you the opportunity to be educated in the traditional sense and learn a trade at the same time - that is how everyone should learn."

"A vocational school compared to a non-vocational school in my thoughts is much better, a voc. school has much better job placement."

"Every school should be like a vocational school. You get more hands on training. And you also get to see what different trades are like."

"I think vocational ed. is better than non-vocational ed. because it teaches you something that you can use right after high school."

"Vocational high school is much more interesting than regular high schools. It gives you a better opportunity to find a career. I think that anyone can benefit from vocational schooling."

"The vocational education is a much better way of learning. The vocational school makes it funner to learn, not boring like high school."

"Vocational education is good for everyone."

- **Vocational education has helped students stay in school/improve grades/improve attitudes toward school**

"I did learn nothing in [Non-Voc] High. But now in a vocational high school I am learning a whole lot more. When I first started in [Voc. High] I didn't know how to read or spell much but since I stayed here my reading and spelling improved."

"If there was no vocational school I would not have returned to school."

"I think vocational education is the best training offered. It brought me from skipping at least 2 days a week; flunking grades, and hating school, to almost perfect attendance, high honors and school spirit."

"Since I have transferred from the high school to voc, I feel much more capable, I think more of myself and my school. At the high school,

my grades sucked - I hated the school, and if I did not get in to the Voc. I would have dropped out of school. Vocational high school has made me look at myself. Also at a voc high school I can decide what I want to be and where I want to go. At the high school I did not feel that way. My parents and most of the teachers made me feel incapable.. Here at the voc. I know what I can do and what I am going to do and the teachers are behind me trying to help me as much as possible. I can make my own career decision not someone make it for me."

"I think [School X's] cosmetology is the greatest. I've never done home work or came to school till I started cosmetology. Cosmetology is something I want to learn and I'm gonna try my best to be the greatest hairdresser I can be."

"I think that vocational school has help me alot with my grades they are better than before."

"Vocational has kept me in high school because it makes the school day fly by. Plus everything I've learned will be helpful in my future."

- **There should be more/better academic courses in vocational schools**

"They don't have enough advanced courses for academically accelerated students."

"The quality of education at [School X] is very good and it does prepare you for further education. One of the main problems though is the math programs here. I am in the 12th grade and taking Algebra 2 even though I'm ranked 19th in class rank with a B+ average. I would prefer to take calculus."

"I think that we should have more courses to get us ready for college cause when we do go we don't know nothing."

"I think that this vocational school should have more language classes then it would be the perfect school!"

"I think that a voc-tech school should have more choices in their senior

year, and possibly have a language course. Because I know some people who are getting held back from college because of languages and not enough of college courses. We should also have drama, art, music."

"The academic courses in this high school should be up to date with the other high schools. The books we (seniors) read they read freshman year that makes us look stupid."

"Vocational high school should have more collage prep. class."

- **Vocational instructors are very good**

"Every teacher I have had at my voc high school have been concerned & interested in me, personally. It was never like that at my sending school (middle) - teachers there were only interested in the best & brightest in the class, anyone below that was unimportant to them."

"The teacher is excellent."

"Mr. [X] of the electrical program and other vocational staff members do an excellent job in vocational training, but they (teachers of vocational division) cannot do it by themselves, they need support from the state."

"My automotive teaches are very helpful and smart."

"The voc. is a good program when you have instructors that care, like my related instructors."

Non-Vocational Students' Comments

- **Vocational education is an easy way out/way to avoid academics.**

"I think vocational education is a cop-out most students take it as an easy way out of high school. Especially if they have poor grades."

"I think vocational programs have a bad reputation because the majority of the kids seem to take easy English and Math class. Most of the time you don't see vocational students in Calculus, or Trig. or even in phase four or five English. This gives the impression that they want to get out the easy way or that the aren't that intelligent."

"Although some students go to vocational schools for legitimate reasons, most students are going because the work is relatively simple. A lot of lower class students go to vocational schools to avoid school work."

"Vocational schools are for people who don't want to do any real work like math and English. They just want to know how to fix a car or build a house, and vocational schools are for people who cant hack college work."

"I seriously think some or most trade student look for easy way outs because they don't want to go to college. When I look at the stage scenery they are building, mostly senior carpentry trade students, the set is very crooked and unstable and dangerous."

"I feel that the high school trade is not reliable because I know alot of the students that attend and they want to avoid the academic part of school. Also I took my car to auto mechanics and the shop teacher said that changing the oil pan was a big of a job."

"They figure it's an easy way to get through high school."

"I think most people who go to the voc are trying to get out of doing schoolwork instead of really wanting to pursue a career. Most of them feel they are not smart enough to go to the high school - or don't want to be."

"Non-Voc. you have to work all the time. Vocational you work every

other week & I feel that's not right. We should all get educated the same."

"I think the vocational school would be better if those kids that were enrolled would be forced to do their regular college prep course instead of turning them into molly coddled individuals because they messed up in junior high. And the only thing they have is their skill and no brain. They could change their mind at the end of vocational school and not be able to go to college. Think about it people."

"The kids in trade are taking an easy way out. They enroll into the easiest classes they could possibly find. All they want are some new tools to steal."

▪ Both vocational and non-vocational programs are good; Vocational programs are for students who want a trade; non-vocational programs are for students who want to go to college.

"Vocational schools and non-vocational schools are both good depending on what a person wants to pursue their career in. Also if people are not "book smart" but they like to use their hands then they might be better off in a vocational school. A lot of the decision depends on what the person want to do later on in life."

"In my opinion both types of schools are necessary to give a better chance for a brighter future to all kids."

"I think the kids that want to take a career that school is great for, but kids that want to learn more about science, history, and psychology I think a non-vocational is better."

"I think both vocational and non-vocational high schools are good, because some people want to pursue a trade and would be better off going to a vocational high school. Others want to pursue goals that they want and would be better off going to a non-vocational school."

"I think that the vocational education programs that are offered in Massachusetts are very good for those people who want to base their careers on things taught to them in vocational schools. The non-vocational programs are also good but these are for those who base

their careers on things taught in non vocational high schools."

"I think both programs are fine it's just a matter of your potential & will to work & what you want to work in that makes the difference of what program to enroll in."

"I think the vocational program in our city is good. The people who go to it want to learn a trade. They want to get out of high school and into the working world. In my opinion, vocational is high school is good for people who want to learn a trade. The non-vocational high school programs are good for the students who want to go to college."

"I am happy with/nonvocational schools. Vocational is great for people who do not want a degree from college. But if you plan on going to college, go to nonvocational schools."

"I think that vocational schools are great if you want hands on experience & intend on getting right into the grime of work. After high school however, if a person is college bound, they should steer away from vocational schools."

"The vocational high school is very good for those students who want to go into a trade for a career. And a non-vocational school is good for those who want to go into business fields or other college fields."

"Non-vocational schools are better for a student planning for a 4 year college. Vocational schools are better for people who want to work with/skills."

"Vocational schools are good for people who know what career they want right after high school. Non vocational high schools are good for preparing a person for college."

- **Vocational programs are a good option for some students; vocational education is beneficial.**

"I believe that vocational school can be beneficial to a person who does not like school and finds school difficult. It is an option to learn a trade and become a working member of the society that we live in and I favor it for people who do not want to go to college."

"Vocational education offers a lot of opportunity to people who like to pursue careers in different areas. My boyfriend attends [X] Tech and he's very pleased about his education."

"Vocational school are very beneficial and worthwhile."

"I feel that vocational schools are a good thing to have so that students who most likely feel they will work after high school have the opportunity to get specific training & experiences."

"Vocational training is vital to the success of our country."

"I think vocational school is very good for people who want hands on training. Because after H.S. (voc) they can go right into the work force."

"I believe that if students want to go to a vocational school to learn the tools of the trade, than they should. There is nothing wrong with attending a vocational high school. Some students might learn more about life in a vocational school."

- **Non-vocational programs provide a better education/more options than vocational programs.**

"I like the high school, it has many opportunities such as drama, art, choir and woods or power. There is alot to learn and there are also great activities and sports. The surroundings, I feel are more proper for kids our age other than the vocational school appears to be."

"I think that non-vocational schools are much more beneficial towards and educated, healthy career. Without college education, many people cannot pursue a career that they would prefer to. Vocational schools I feel, will prevent people from receiving a full education, teach children things that would change their mind about attending college."

"I don't think the vocational education program offers any type of good education as far as what a regular college would require."

"I enjoy the extracurricular activities offered at my high school better than vocational high schools, and academically also I feel non vocational schools have more to offer."

"If someone such as me wants to go on to college, learn about society/issues and possibly try to make a change in the world other than fixing peoples sinks, vocational school is not an option. That is the image I get from everyone around here, including the people at [X] Vocational when I visited there."

"High school is a better learning environment."

"I'd rather be in a non-vocational school with my friends than a vocational school. I also chose a non-vocational school because it offers foreign languages and vocational schools don't. I wanted the chance to take college prep courses to prepare for college. I don't want to only be able to work at jobs I learned about in a vocational school."

"Non vocational high schools offer a much better selection and choice than vocational."

"Vocational schools are good for people who know what they want to do and don't mind leaving their friends, but a non-vocational school has a higher and better academic standings. Many people that have graduated from the Tech have to [X] Community College or some other establishment that can teach them better English and more math. With a non-vocational school, you get basic training, plus you can take courses that will prepare you for college and your career choice."

"Non-vocational education is better because it teaches you facts and not a trade. It opens more doors for you."

"Vocational is alright for those who want to attend but I think students would be better of at a non-vocational high school."

"I think non-vocational schools are much better than vocational schools!"

▪ Vocational programs are for losers and drug users

"Voke's have a higher % of drugs and the average voke of [X] High School is a dirty shabby individual who drinks, smokes dope and takes harder drugs & causes trouble."

"Vocational schools are where all the class 'burn-outs' go so they can pass. That makes if very difficult for a good student to attend the school, because the 'burn-outs" always harass and bother them."

"I think vocational school sucks and I could never do it. All the kids in the trade smell they smoke and look like [X]. They have the skankyist girl friends they are out of control and can't keep their mouths shut they cause trouble and come to school drunk more than 4 times a week."

"High school vocational is bad because only the people that won't succeed in my opinion go there."

"I think vocational education programs are cop outs for losers or scrubs who get bad grades in school."

"All the kids I know who went to vocational school after middle school did it because they either got bad marks or they didn't fit in with anyone."

"Most girls don't consider the voke unless they flunk out of high school. I'm sorry to say that but it's true."

"All the burnouts took shop, so those that were burnouts in middle school took shop in H.S."

"The trade kids are losers and grease monkeys and to make it in life they got to take off their skirts and take a shower using soap."

"The vocational high school I attended for my junior year was a joke. No one did work people just got by and barely graduate. People got away with all kinds of trouble."

"In all honesty, I do not think the people of a nonvocational school respect a vocational school. This includes myself."

"At our school everybody makes fun of people in trade, because it seems people in trade are kids who get in trouble in school and get bad grades, there are a few exemptions, but most seem to be weird."

"Vocational schools I think have a bad reputation the kids that go there are dirt bags & there are alot of fights and stuff."

"The people I know who goes to the vocational schools would of been dropouts if they didn't go. They are also the poor students, and trouble makers."

"Most high school students who attend a vocational school are people who have no will to succeed."

"Only low lifes go to a voc school, so they can do as little work as possible."

"Most of the kids who went to vocational school are wimps."

"In this area vocational schools are not very popular. Most people who attend them are not what you would call "scholars"."

"Mostly losers and drug users go to vocational."

"The vocational school is in our town. I'm sure many students in my grade would like to go, but the element in the school is bad. Our technical school is generally associated with juvenile delinquents. The case may be that the school is an excellent place to learn a trade but it is populated with people of the wrong way of living. Some of my friends who are smart would still like to go to the vocational school but the atmosphere is wrong."

"Most of the vocational kids do drugs. They smoke pot and are rude at times."

"In our school system we are the elite and the other school we call the vocational idiots."

▪ Not interested in vocational education/vocational education not appropriate for career goals.

"I have nothing against vocational schools-they're just not for me."

"I chose non-vocational high school because I want to continue my education to the college level and major in communications. I do not think a vocational school would have helped me."

"The reason I'm in non vocational high school is because I have no interest in a vocational career."

"I believe that my high school education has been a meaningful and worthwhile experience. I have never thought about entering or starting a vocational career. I always assumed that I would go to a four-year college. I don't think that students who choose a vocational career are foolish, but I just wouldn't want to do it."

"I am very pleased with the non-vocational training I am receiving at my present school. I feel that I am benefiting more by being enrolled in my present school than if I were attending a vocational school."

"I feel that the reason why I did not choose a vocational program because of what I want to do when I leave school."

"I believe it was more to my advantage to attend a non-vocational (high school).

"In my opinion I pick non-vocational because I plan to go to a 4-year college, But if someone else wants to go to a vocational high school I have nothing against it."

"I chose a non-vocational high because of the field I want to go into. I have nothing against a vocational school."

"High school for me was the best thing for me. A vocational school would not be the right place for me because I'm more interested in the college route."

"I don't like vocational high school because it's not right for me because

to be what I want to I have to go to a two year, then a four-year college after graduation."

- **The bad reputation of vocational education prevents students from enrolling in vocational programs**

"I think in junior high, you were almost assumed to go to a non-vocational school. If someone said they were going to a vocational school, people would say "That's too bad." They would feel sorry for that person. If the reputation weren't so bad, more people would end up attending vocational school."

"But the kids that attend the vocational sections don't have a very good reputation around school and I think that it drives some people away from the vocations because they don't want to associate with those types of people."

"There seem to be a lot of kids who might be better off in a tech school who don't go because of its reputation as a school with a lot of dumb kids."

"There is lot of money in the trades. There is a stereotype however, that the people attending a vocational school won't make any money. For vocational schools to get a better reputation they must let the ignorant kids know the true facts of what is in their future after vocational school."

"A lot of people see vocational school as a place for losers to go to. If it had a better image I'm sure more people would attend."

"In junior high the vocational program was considered a program for people who could not handle academics. It was viewed as a way out if the student thought they couldn't handle high school and weren't interested in college. I now realize that vocational has its place and many students I know would have been happier in vocational, but didn't sign up for it because of its reputation."

"I have friend who are in vocational schools, and it is because they are there to learn a special skill. Vocational schools sometimes are frowned upon and I don't think that is fair."

"I think that most people in high school who had bad grades in junior high do not want to attend a voke school where they'll be better off because of the reputation they might get."

"Vocational schools have a reputation for lazy kids that want to do nothing except to barely pass. If the reputation was boosted and people knew more about these schools maybe more people would to them."

"The vocational educational programs have a bad reputation with most Massachusetts residents. To improve its reputation, more highly skilled students should be encouraged to attend them."

"I think a lot of people have the wrong look about vocational schools. I think its good to have them."

"I think both types of schools are great - it's just that vocational schools are often downgraded and even ignored by society."

"Kids in a non-vocational school view the kids that attend vocational schools, for the most part, as kids who are too dumb to attend college. Personally, I admire kids who go to get vocational skills in the career they want. I think it's better to enroll in a vocational school and get skills then to enroll in all general courses just to get through high school with easy classes."

"I believe vocational schools are far underrated."

Summary of Differences Among Vocational, College Prep, and General Studies Students

This report has documented, on a question-by-question basis, similarities and differences among vocational, college prep, and general studies students. Table 32 at the end of this section summarizes some of the differences among the three types of students on the questions included in the survey. In addition, a stepwise "discriminant analysis" was performed which analyzed the overall extent to which the three types of students differed statistically when several survey questions were considered simultaneously (that is, whether vocational, college prep, and general studies students really are distinct types of students in terms of attitudes, goals, career plans, and high school experiences measured by the survey).

In this study, the three "groups" to be distinguished were: vocational students, college preparatory students, and general studies students. The "discriminating variables" or characteristics on which these groups were compared were responses to 46 of the questions in the survey that covered a variety of aspects of students' decision to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational program, high school experiences, career plans, and opinions about vocational education.

For this study, the discriminant analysis procedure computed one "discriminant function" or a linear combination of all the "discriminating variables" (responses to questions) such that the groups were as statistically distinct as possible. Two pieces of information from this discriminant analysis are summarized in Figure 14 (for grade 12 students) and in Figure 15 (for grade 10 students): (a) the distribution of students' "discriminant scores" on the "discriminant function" and (b) the classification summary.

The tops of Figures 14 and 15 depict the distribution of students' standardized composite scores on the survey questions when the mean or average score for all students was equal to 0 and the standard deviation was 1. These two distributions reveal two important findings.

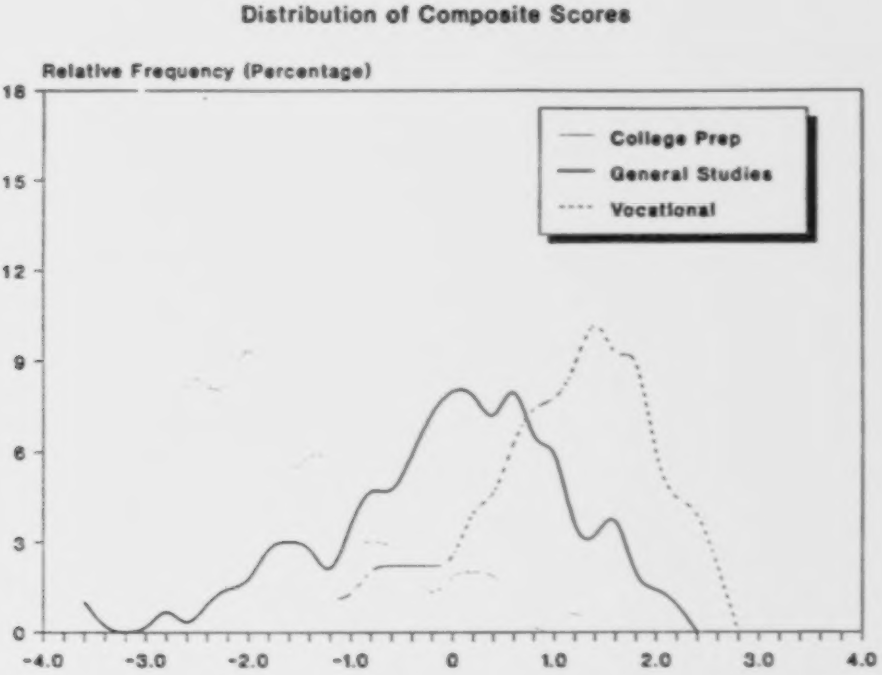
First, for both grade levels, vocational students and college prep students represent opposite end of the continuum and there is little overlap between the two groups of students. General studies students fall between college prep and vocational students on this continuum, although they overlap more with vocational students that with college prep students in their responses to the group of survey questions.

- Second, there is a greater amount of overlap among the three types of students at grade 10 than at grade 12; that is, there are more clearly delineated "student types" at the end of students' high school careers than at the beginning.

The classification analyses, included at the bottom of Figures 14 and 15, can be used to determine how well the composite scores created by the analysis can be used to predict whether a student is a vocational, college prep, or general studies student. The classification summary reports the percentage of college prep, vocational, and general studies who were correctly identified or classified on the basis of their responses to the survey questions. For example, 83% of the grade 12 college prep students were correctly predicted to be college prep students on the basis of their responses; 15% would be misclassified as general studies students, and only 2% were mistakenly classified as vocational students. Similarly, 76 % of grade 12 vocational students were predicted to be vocational students, 20% were misclassified as general studies students and only 4% were mistakenly predicted to be college prep students. In contrast, general studies students were a less clearly classifiable group and shared properties of both college prep and vocational students. Only half (51%) of the grade 12 general studies students would be correctly classified on the basis of their responses to survey questions; 17% of the general studies students were mistakenly classified as college prep students and almost twice as many (32%) were misclassified as vocational students.

Figure 14

Results of Discriminant Analysis - Grade 12

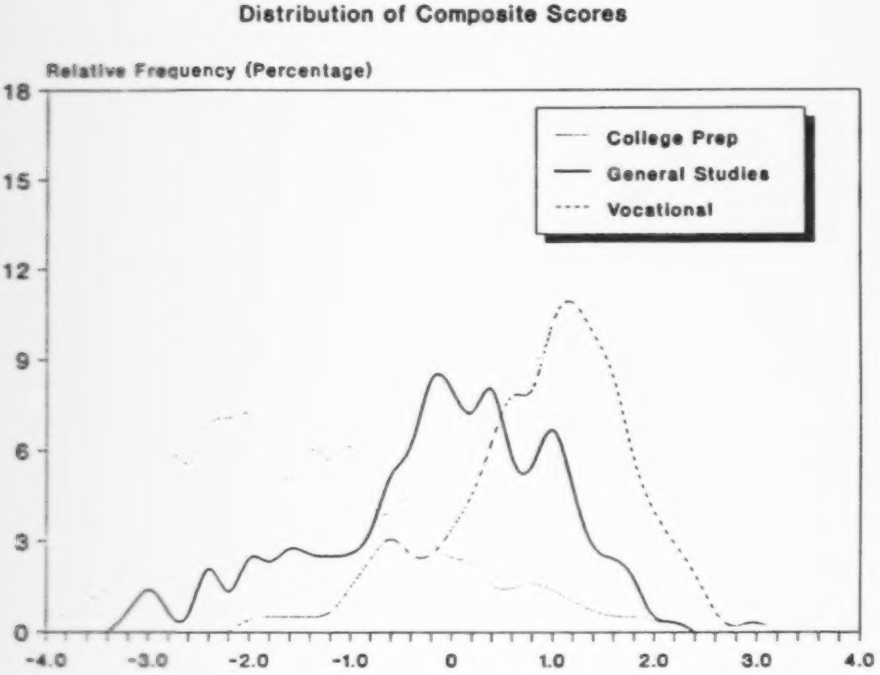


Classification Summary - Grade 12

	Predicted Group Membership		
Actual Group Membership	**College Prep**	**General Studies**	**Vocational**
College Prep	83%	15%	2%
General Studies	17%	51%	32%
Vocational	4%	20%	76%

Figure 15

Results of Discriminant Analysis - Grade 10



Classification Summary - Grade 10

Actual Group Membership	College Prep	General Studies	Vocational
	Predicted Group Membership		
College Prep	73%	20%	7%
General Studies	23%	44%	33%
Vocational	4%	21%	75%

Table 32

Summary of Noteworthy Differences Among Vocational, College Prep, and General Studies Students on Survey Questions

Survey Question	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Decision to Enroll in Vocational or Non-Vocational Program			
People rated "very important" in decision			
You (Student)	81%	86%	68%
Parents	31%	45%	23%
Did anyone disagree with decision?			
Yes	19%	5%	6%
How students learned about high school			
Junior high guidance	33%	47%	42%
Junior high teachers	14%	41%	22%
Visited high school	38%	27%	23%
Considered enrolling in other type of high school program?			
Not at all	46%	71%	50%
Fair amount or a lot	21%	7%	23%
Reasons vocational students enrolled in vocational education			
Do not want to go to college	23%	53%	45%
Knew what career they wanted	43%	68%	63%
Received poor grades in jr. high	17%	37%	26%

Table 32 (continued)

Survey Question	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Decision to Enroll in Vocational or Non-Vocational Program			
Reasons non-vocational students enrolled in non-vocational programs			
Want to go to college	54%	90%	46%
Received good grades in jr. high	36%	72%	48%
Thought they would get better education	52%	71%	44%
Not interested in voc education	48%	57%	34%
Parents wanted non-voc program	47%	44%	26%
Just assumed would	47%	58%	38%
Prefer learning new ideas and facts to practical experiences	35%	45%	33%
Did students have enough information to make a good decision about whether to enroll in vocational or non-vocational program?			
Yes	56%	66%	46%
High School Experiences			
How often students met with high school guidance counselor during past year			
Never	41%	19%	24%
3 or more times	28%	49%	40%
How satisfied with high school guidance services			
Not at all	18%	11%	25%

Table 32 (continued)

Survey Question	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
High School Experiences			
High school like students thought it would be?			
Yes	38%	48%	37%
No, it's better	29%	22%	18%
No, it's worse	16%	13%	24%
Ever seriously considered dropping out of school?			
Yes	24%	7%	27%
If have considered dropping out, has type of high school program helped stay in school?			
Yes	48%	23%	16%
What high school guidance counselors have advised students to do after completing high school			
Have not discussed	56%	29%	44%
Attend 4-year college	14%	64%	23%
Attend 2-year college	18%	15%	35%
Would students still enroll in the same type of high school program (voc or non-voc) if they "had it to do all over again?"			
Yes	77%	85%	57%

Table 32 (continued)

Survey Question	Vocational Students	College Preparatory Students	General Studies Students
Career and Post High School Plans			
Decided on career area to pursue?			
Yes	69%	57%	50%
When decided on career? (Grade 12 students only)			
Before grade 11	59%	43%	44%
After grade 11	33%	54%	50%
Plans after high school			
Don't know	16%	6%	22%
Attend 2-year college	20%	13%	35%
Attend 4-year college	15%	79%	19%
Work full-time	45%	6%	27%
Opinions About Vocational Education			
People rated as having "Favorable" opinion about vocational programs offered in Massachusetts high schools			
You (Student)	94%	51%	59%
Parents	90%	51%	60%
Friends	76%	31%	46%
Brothers-Sisters	81%	38%	47%
Employers	80%	68%	63%
College Professors	46%	16%	28%

Issues Raised by the Survey About Guidance and Counseling

Although a primary goal of the survey was to address some concerns of vocational educators, students' responses to survey questions, along with their written comments, raised several issues about the guidance and counseling of students that should be of interest to both vocational and non-vocational educators. This section summarizes seven issues about junior high and high school guidance and counseling services. The reader should bear in mind that this summary is based on students' reported opinions and perceptions and does not necessarily reflect schools' stated policies or actual practices.

- **Many students did not have enough information in junior high or middle school to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational high school program.**

The decision to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational program is an important one that not only influences students' high school experiences, but is likely to have longer-term effects on students' career development. But only 39% of grade 12 general studies students, 61% of college prep students, and 54% of vocational students believe that they had enough information to make a good decision. Furthermore, only half of the grade 12 general studies students believe that they made the correct decision; only 53% reported that they would still enroll in a non-vocational program instead of a vocational program if they had the decision to make all over again.

- **For many students, junior high or middle school guidance counseling was either non-existent or was slanted toward encouraging students to enroll in non-vocational programs.**

Over 40% of the students reported that they *never* met with a junior high or middle school counselor to discuss high school and their career plans. And, less than 40% of the students indicated that they learned about high school from a junior high or middle school guidance counselor.

In addition, almost half (44%) of students' written comments about junior high guidance services noted that counselors did not provide any information about vocational education or discouraged students from enrolling in vocational programs. According to students, it was assumed that students would enroll in non-vocational programs.

- **Many students would like to meet more frequently with a high school guidance counselor to discuss their career goals and post high school plans.**

Over one-third of grade 10 college prep and general studies students reported that they *never* met with a high school guidance counselor during the school year to discuss their career plans and goals. And, 14% of non-vocational students' written comments about high school guidance services suggested that counselors should meet more frequently with students on a one-to-one basis.

Furthermore, the number of meetings with the high school counselor was found to be significantly related to students' satisfaction with guidance services; the greater the number of meetings with a counselor, the higher the level of satisfaction.

- **College preparatory students have greater access to high school guidance services than general studies students do.**

Only 3% of grade 12 college prep students versus 15% of general studies students *never* met with a high school guidance counselor during the school year; over three-fourths (77%) of grade 12 college prep students compared to only half (52%) of grade 12 general studies students met with a counselor *3 or more times* during the year. These results do not necessarily mean that general studies students were denied counseling services, although several students' written comments suggested that counselors were more interested in helping college-bound students than general studies students.

- **Grade 12 students have greater access to high school guidance services than grade 10 students do.**

Not surprisingly, grade 12 students were substantially more likely than grade 10 students to have met with a high school counselor during the past year to discuss career goals and post high school plans. For example, only 3% of grade 12 college prep students versus 34% of grade 10 college prep students *never* met with a counselor during the school year.

It might be useful to consider whether it would be beneficial to students, particularly general studies students, to offer more career guidance earlier in students' high school careers.

- **Many students were not satisfied with high school guidance services.**

Overall, less than one-third (29%) of the students were *very satisfied* with high school guidance services and almost one-fifth (18%) were *not at all satisfied*; over one-fourth (26%) of general studies students were *not at all satisfied*.

Almost three-fourths of students' written comments about high school guidance services were unfavorable. Students' major complaints were:

- Counselors are not competent, are too pushy, are not understanding enough (24%)
- Counseling services are very poor, disorganized, or not at all helpful (22%)
- Counselors do not meet with students frequently enough (14%)
- Counselors only care about college-bound students (6%)
- Counselors are often not available or are not accessible (6%)

- **High schools across the state vary substantially in how frequently high school guidance services are provided to students.**

There were large differences among the 41 schools included in the survey in the frequency with which students met with their high school guidance counselors. The percentage of students who reported that they *never* met with a counselor during the past year ranged from 9% to 69% for the 41 schools. The percentage of students who indicated that they met *6 or more times* with a counselor ranged from 7% to 29%. These differences among schools were not attributable to school type (vocational or non-vocational).

These differences are noteworthy because the number of meetings with the high school counselor was found to be significantly related to students' satisfaction with guidance services; the greater the number of meetings with a counselor, the higher the level of satisfaction.

Implications for Vocational Educators for Improving Student Recruitment

The survey results, combined with students' written comments, carry implications for vocational educators who are concerned with recruiting students who are likely to benefit from vocational-technical education programs. This sections addresses three questions:

- Are there non-vocational students who might have benefitted from vocational education programs?

- What are some of the barriers that kept these non-vocational students from enrolling in vocational programs?

- What are some possible ways to remove or minimize the effects of these barriers for future groups of students?

Non-Vocational Students Who Might Have Benefitted From Vocational Programs

Results of the survey suggest that most college prep students would not have been good candidates for vocational programs, but many general studies students might have benefitted from vocational programs.

For the most part, college prep students were satisfied with their decision to enroll in a non-vocational program, had clear cut plans after high school that they believed were best met through a college prep high school program, were not interested in vocational education, and were disinclined to even consider vocational education as a viable option.

- Most (87%) of the college prep students said they would still enroll in a non-vocational program instead of a vocational program if the "had it to do all over again."

- Most (81%) of the college prep students plan to attend a four-year college after completing high school and two of the most frequently cited reasons for choosing a non-vocational program were that students want to go to college (90%) and that they believed they would get a better education in a non-vocational high school program than in a vocational program (71%).

- Almost three-fifths (57%) of college prep students reported that they were not interested in vocational education.
- Almost three-fourths (74%) of grade 12 college prep students indicated that they did "not at all" consider enrolling in a vocational high school program.

In contrast, many general students were not satisfied with their decision to enroll in a non-vocational program, had post high school plans that might best be served by a vocational education, were interested in vocational education, and were more receptive than college prep students to the possibility of enrolling in vocational programs.

- Only half (53%) of grade 12 general studies students indicated that they would still enroll in a non-vocational high school program instead of a vocational program if they had the decision to make all over again. Over 60% of those who would not still enroll in a non-vocational program said they would not do so because they want to learn a trade or vocational skills.
- Almost one-third (30%) of grade 12 general studies students indicated that they plan to enter the work force full-time after completing high school. It is reasonable to question whether a vocational-technical education program might have better prepared these students for the world of work than a general high school program.
- Whereas college prep students cited reasons for their decision to enroll in a non-vocational program that were linked to their post high school plans and career goals, many general studies students did not. The prevalent reason given by general studies students for enrolling in a non-vocational program was that they had not decided on a career. For at least some of these general studies students, vocational-technical education programs might have helped them identify a career area to pursue.
- Four of the top ten career areas (cosmetology, construction, child care, and automotive) identified by those general studies

students who have decided on a career area correspond to vocational programs available in Massachusetts high schools.

- Almost one-fourth (24%) of grade 10 general studies students have considered enrolling in a vocational program either "a fair amount" or "a lot."
- Only one-third (34%) of general studies students reported that they were not interested in vocational education.

These findings suggest that many general studies students might have been good candidates for vocational education programs.

Barriers to Enrolling in Vocational Education Programs

This survey identified four barriers that might have kept general studies students from enrolling in vocational-technical high school programs: lack of information, lack of guidance in junior high school, poor image of vocational education, and misperceptions about vocational education.

Lack of information about vocational education. Only 39% of grade 12 general studies students believed that they had enough information to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational high school program. Two of the most frequently reported types of information that students thought would have helped them were: information about vocational education and information about the differences between vocational and non-vocational programs.

Lack of guidance in junior high or middle school. Forty percent of grade 12 general studies students *never* met with a counselor during their last year in junior high or middle school to discuss high school or their career goals. Many students who did meet with a counselor noted that vocational education was not presented as an option; some students characterized the process as one in which it was just assumed that students would enroll in non-vocational programs.

Poor image of vocational education. Over 40% of general studies students indicated that they have an unfavorable opinion about vocational programs offered in Massachusetts high schools. Many general studies students also rated as unfavorable the opinions of people with whom they associate (parents, friends, siblings) and people who are likely to influence their futures (employers, college professors).

Furthermore, one-third of the written comments of non-vocational students characterized vocational programs as an easy way out for losers and drug abusers. In addition, 11% of students' written comments noted that the bad reputation of vocational programs does prevent students from enrolling in vocational programs.

Misperceptions about vocational education. Three major misperceptions about vocational-technical education emerged from students' responses to survey questions and written comments.

- **A student has to know what career she wants to pursue when she begins high school in order to benefit from vocational education.** Almost two-thirds of general studies students believed that one reason vocational students enrolled in vocational programs was because they already knew what career they wanted to pursue. In contrast, only 43% of vocational students cited this as an actual reason for their decision.

  In addition, the single most prevalent reason given by general studies students for not choosing vocational education was that they did not know what career they wanted to pursue. Thus, the misperception that students must know what career they will pursue before they enter high school might have been a barrier for some general studies students who did not know what career they wanted to pursue.

  Many general studies students are apparently unaware of the exploratory programs offered by vocational-technical schools during grade 9, in which students experience several different shop areas before deciding on a program area to pursue.

- **Vocational programs are for students who do not plan to go to college.** Almost one-fifth of the written comments of non-vocational students conveyed the simple formula, "vocational programs are for students who want to learn a trade; non-vocational programs are for students who want to go to college." In addition, 72% of general studies students and 84% of college prep students believed that college professors in Massachusetts have unfavorable opinions about vocational education.

But in the sample of vocational students included in the survey, 22% indicated that they planned to attend a two-year college and 13% planned to attend a four-year college.

- **Vocational programs prepare students for blue collar jobs in the trades.** Some of the written comments of non-vocational students (including some that were intended to be positive) characterized vocational programs as training people for hands-on trades such as carpentry, plumbing, and auto mechanics. Many non-vocational students are apparently unaware of the vast array of non-trade areas that vocational-technical education embraces, such as technical fields and health occupations.

Reducing Barriers To Enrolling in Vocational Education

Increased information about vocational education and improved guidance at the junior high school level would seem to be two keys to reducing the four barriers identified in this survey. However, modifying junior high and middle school guidance policies is probably less under the control of vocational educators than increasing and improving the dissemination of information.

The Division of Occupational Education and individual vocational-technical school districts participate on an ongoing basis in efforts to disseminate information about vocational-technical education in Massachusetts. This survey has identified the people to whom information should be targeted and the types of information that might be disseminated.

People To Whom Information Should be Targeted

Information about vocational education might be targeted to four groups of people who impact on students' opinions about vocational education and their decision to enroll in vocational or non-vocational programs.

- People students have identified as "very important" in the decision: themselves and their parents

- People students have identified as sources of information about high school and high school options: friends, junior high school guidance counselors, junior high school teachers, and parents

- People who will influence students' futures and who students believe hold unfavorable opinions about vocational education: employers and college professors

- All students, because they believe they play an important role in the decision, they are the "friends" that provide information about high school, and they are part of the milieu that contributes to and participates in perpetuating the image of vocational education.

Types of Information that Might be Disseminated

The survey suggests that three types of information should be disseminated: information that students reported would have helped them, information that boosts the image of vocational education, and information that combats misperceptions about vocational education.

- Information students said would have helped them make a good decision about whether to enroll in vocational or non-vocational programs included:

  - more information about vocational education, what goes on in vocational schools, and the good and bad things about vocational education;

  - information about the differences between vocational programs and non-vocational programs and the advantages and disadvantages of each;

  - detailed information about the different shop areas available; and

  - career and salary information; educational requirements for different careers.

- The image of vocational education still needs to be improved. Vocational educators need to continue to try to convey the message that vocational education can be a positive choice with positive outcomes, not merely a last resort for losers or a haven for drug abusers and social misfits. These positive outcomes include not only what happens to students after high school (e.g., job placement) but also what happens to students during their high school years. This survey identified several positive effects on students' high school experiences that need to be made known.

  - Vocational programs have a positive impact on preventing students' from dropping out of school; vocational students who considered dropping out were three times as likely as general studies students who considered dropping out to report that their high school program helped them stay in school.

  - Many students reported in their written comments that vocational education has helped them improve their grades and improve their attitudes toward school.

  - Most vocational students were very satisfied with their vocational education; vocational students were significantly more likely than general studies student to report that they would still enroll in the same type of high school program.

  - Vocational students were more likely than general studies or college prep students to indicate that high school was *better* than they expected it would be.

    It might be useful to recruit vocational students or graduates to help spread the message about the many positive aspects of vocational education. In their written comments, many vocational students were very enthusiastic about vocational education and indicated that they would highly recommend vocational education to others.

- Vocational educators need to continue to address misperceptions about vocational education, including three identified by this survey.

  - Students (and others) need to know that students do not necessarily have to have decided on a career before entering high school in order to benefit from vocational education programs. Information about the exploratory programs offered by vocational-technical schools to students in grade 9 should be more available.

- People need to be made aware that vocational students can and do attend college after completing high school; a vocational education does not preclude a college education. The Division of Occupational conducts follow-up studies on vocational program completers; the percentage of vocational students who successfully attend and complete college needs to be highlighted.

- People need to know that vocational education in Massachusetts embraces many areas other than just the trades, for example, technical occupations, health occupations, agriculture, distributive education, and consumer and homemaking. Two recent publications by the Division of Occupational Education, *Massachusetts Vocational-Technical Education Directory* and *Vocational Technical Education in Massachusetts* describe the diverse areas covered by vocational-technical education.

Appendix A

Student Survey

Vocational and Non-Vocational Student Versions

HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY

Vocational Student Version

The Massachusetts Department of Education is conducting a survey of 10th and 12th grade students to find out why students decide to enroll in vocational education or non-vocational high school programs and the types of career plans that students have formed. Your class has been selected to participate in this survey.

Your answers will be kept confidential and results will not be reported in any way that can identify you. So you should feel free to answer all questions completely and honestly.

For purposes of this survey, the following definitions of vocational and non-vocational programs apply.

You are considered to be in a **VOCATIONAL** education high school program if:

- You are taking an organized program of studies in: agriculture, distributive education, health occupations, consumer and homemaking, technical occupations, or trade and industry. Your program also includes related theory and academic courses.

  You are NOT considered to be in a vocational education program if you are taking a program of studies in the business and office occupations, industrial arts, or home economics.

****

You are considered to be in a **NON-VOCATIONAL** high school program if:

- You are taking a *College Preparatory* program of studies (that is, you have fairly definite plans to attend college after completing high school and you are taking academic courses in high school that are likely to enhance your chances of being accepted into college and succeeding in college-level work)

OR

- You are taking a *General Studies* program (that is, you are NOT taking a college preparatory or vocational program; you are taking courses that lead to a high school diploma)

OR

- You are enrolled in a program in business and office occupations, industrial arts, or home economics.

High School Survey

1. School ________________________ 2. Grade ____ 10 ____ 12

3. Sex ____ Female ____ Male

4. Race/Ethnicity ____ Hispanic ____ Black ____ White ____ Asian/Pacific Islander
____ Other ______________________

5. Vocational Program Area (e.g., Carpentry) ______________________

6. Have you changed programs or schools since you began high school? (Check *all* answers that apply)

____ No
____ Yes, I changed high schools
____ Yes, I changed from a vocational education program to a non-vocational program
____ Yes, I changed from a non-vocational program to a vocational education program
____ Yes, I changed from one vocational program area to another vocational program

If so, why did you change programs or schools? ________________________________

7. Have you decided on a career area that you want to pursue?

____ Yes ____ No ____ Not sure

If so, what career? ____________________________________

If so, what grade were you in when you decided on this career?

____ 6th grade or earlier ____ 7th or 8th grade ____ 9th or 10th grade
____ 11th grade ____ 12th grade ____ Don't know

8. What are your plans after you complete high school? (Check *all* answers that apply)

____ Don't know
____ Attend a two-year college
____ Attend a four-year college
____ Pursue further vocational training
____ Enter the military
____ Work full-time
____ Work part-time
____ Other (what?) _________________________________

9. How *important* were the following people in the decision that you would enroll in a *vocational* education high school program?

Very	*Some-what*	*Not at All*	*Don't Know*	
____	____	____	____	you
____	____	____	____	your parents/guardians
____	____	____	____	your friends
____	____	____	____	your brothers and sisters
____	____	____	____	your junior high/middle school guidance counselor
____	____	____	____	your junior high/middle school teachers
____	____	____	____	other (who?) ______________________________

Did any of the people listed above *disagree* with the decision that you would enroll in a vocational program? ____ Don't Know ____ No ____ Yes (who?) ______________

10. How did you first learn about vocational education and the vocational education options available to you? (Check *all* answers that apply)

____ I don't know
____ junior high/middle school guidance counselor
____ junior high/middle school teachers
____ parents/guardians
____ friends
____ brothers or sisters
____ I visited the vocational school with a junior high class
____ I heard a vocational school representative speak at my junior high school
____ I read brochures or catalogs about vocational programs
____ Other (what?) ____

11. During your last year in *junior high/middle school*, how often did you meet with your guidance counselor to discuss high school and your career plans?

____ Never ____ 1-2 times ____ 3-5 times ____ 6 or more times

12. Thinking back to your last year in *junior high/middle school*, do you think you had enough information to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a vocational education program or a non-vocational high school program?

____ No ____ Yes ____ Not Sure

If not, what information would have been helpful to you? ______________________

____

13. Did you ever consider or think about enrolling in a *non-vocational* high school program instead of a vocational program?

____ No, not at all ____ Yes, a little ____ Yes, a fair amount ____ Yes, a lot

14. Why did YOU enroll in a *vocational* education program instead of a non-vocational high school program? Check whether each of the following reasons influenced this decision.

Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*	*Because......*
____	____	____	I was interested in vocational education.
____	____	____	I do not want to go to college.
____	____	____	I already knew what career I wanted to pursue after high school.
____	____	____	I have the ability or skills for vocational education.
____	____	____	I prefer practical experiences to learning about theories and facts.
____	____	____	My parents wanted me to attend a vocational program.
____	____	____	I need/want to be prepared to enter a job when I graduate from high school.
____	____	____	I want to be prepared to study a technical subject in college.
____	____	____	My guidance counselor suggested that I enroll in vocational education.
____	____	____	Vocational education was the best way for me to meet my career goals.
____	____	____	I received poor grades in junior high/middle school.
____	____	____	I did not want to attend my neighborhood high school.
____	____	____	I don't know.
____	____	____	Other (what?) ____

15. Why do you think OTHER STUDENTS enrolled in a *non-vocational* high school program instead of a vocational education program? Check whether you think each of the following reasons influenced their decision.

Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*	*Because.......*
___	___	___	They never really thought about it; they just assumed they would.
___	___	___	They are not interested in vocational education.
___	___	___	They want to go to college.
___	___	___	Their parents wanted them to attend a non-vocational program.
___	___	___	They think that vocational programs have a bad reputation.
___	___	___	They received good grades in junior high/middle school.
___	___	___	They were not sure what career they wanted to pursue.
___	___	___	They do not have the ability or skills for vocational education.
___	___	___	Their guidance counselors encouraged them to enroll in a non-vocational program.
___	___	___	They thought they would get a better education in a non-vocational program than in a vocational program.
___	___	___	They prefer learning about new ideas and facts rather than practical experiences.
___	___	___	Other (what?) ________________________________

16. Since September, how often have you met with your *high school* guidance counselor to discuss your career goals and your plans after high school?

___ Never ___ 1-2 times ___ 3-5 times ___ 6 or more times

17. How satisfied are you with the guidance services that your high school provides?

___ Very satisfied ___ Somewhat ___ Slightly ___ Not at all

18. Has high school turned out to be what you thought it would be like when you were in junior high/middle school?

____ Yes ____ No, it's worse ____ No, it's better ____ Not sure

19. Have you ever thought seriously about dropping out of high school?

____ Yes ____ No ____ Not sure

If so, has being enrolled in a vocational program instead of a non-vocational high school program helped you to stay in school?

____ Yes ____ No ____ Not sure

20. Do you think the following people generally have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about vocational education programs offered in Massachusetts high schools?

Opinion about Vocational Education:

Favorable	*Unfavorable*	*Don't Know*	
____	____	____	your parents
____	____	____	your friends
____	____	____	you
____	____	____	your junior high/middle school teachers
____	____	____	your junior high/middle school guidance counselor
____	____	____	your brothers and sisters
____	____	____	your high school teachers
____	____	____	the general public in Massachusetts
____	____	____	employers in Massachusetts
____	____	____	college professors in Massachusetts

21. What have *your parents/guardians* encouraged you to do after high school? (Check *all* answers that apply)

____ Attend a two-year college
____ Attend a four-year college
____ Pursue further vocational training
____ Enter the military
____ Work full-time
____ Work part-time
____ We have not discussed it
____ Other (what?) ______________________________

22. What has your *high school guidance counselor* encouraged you to do after high school? (Check *all* answers that apply)

____ Attend a two-year college
____ Attend a four-year college
____ Pursue further vocational training
____ Enter the military
____ Work full-time
____ Work part-time
____ We have not discussed it
____ Other (what?) ______________________________________

23. If you had it to do all over again, would you still enroll in *vocational* education instead of a non-vocational high school program?

____ Yes   ____ No   ____ I'm not sure

If no, why not?____

____

COMMENTS Use the space below for comments about vocational education, high school, or the career guidance and counseling offered in your junior high and high school.

HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY

Non-Vocational Student Version

The Massachusetts Department of Education is conducting a survey of 10th and 12th grade students to find out why students decide to enroll in vocational education or non-vocational high school programs and the types of career plans that students have formed. Your class has been selected to participate in this survey.

Your answers will be kept confidential and results will not be reported in any way that can identify you. So you should feel free to answer all questions completely and honestly.

For purposes of this survey, the following definitions of vocational and non-vocational programs apply.

You are considered to be in a **VOCATIONAL** education high school program if:

- You are taking an organized program of studies in: agriculture, distributive education, health occupations, consumer and homemaking, technical occupations, or trade and industry. Your program also includes related theory and academic courses.

You are NOT considered to be in a vocational education program if you are taking a program of studies in the business and office occupations, industrial arts, or home economics.

****

You are considered to be in a **NON-VOCATIONAL** high school program if:

- You are taking a *College Preparatory* program of studies (that is, you have fairly definite plans to attend college after completing high school and you are taking academic courses in high school that are likely to enhance your chances of being accepted into college and succeeding in college-level work)

OR

- You are taking a *General Studies* program (that is, you are NOT taking a college preparatory or vocational program; you are taking courses that lead to a high school diploma)

OR

- You are enrolled in a program in business and office occupations, industrial arts, or home economics.

High School Survey

1. School ________________________ 2. Grade ___ 10 ___ 12

3. Sex ___ Female ___ Male

4. Race/Ethnicity ___ Hispanic ___ Black ___ White ___ Asian/Pacific Islander
___ Other ______________________

5. Program of Studies ___ College Preparatory ___ General Studies ___ Other
___ Business and Office

6. Have you changed programs or schools since you began high school? (Check *all* answers that apply)

___ No
___ Yes, I changed high schools
___ Yes, I changed from a vocational education program to a non-vocational program
___ Yes, I changed from a non-vocational program to a vocational education program
___ Yes, I changed from one vocational program area to another vocational program

If so, why did you change programs or schools? ________________________________

7. Have you decided on a career area that you want to pursue?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure

If so, what career? ________________________________

If so, what grade were you in when you decided on this career?

___ 6th grade or earlier ___ 7th or 8th grade ___ 9th or 10th grade
___ 11th grade ___ 12th grade ___ Don't know

8. What are your plans after you complete high school? (Check *all* answers that apply)

___ Don't know
___ Attend a two-year college
___ Attend a four-year college
___ Pursue vocational training
___ Enter the military
___ Work full-time
___ Work part-time
___ Other (what?) ________________________________

9. How *important* were the following people in the decision that you would enroll in a *non-vocational* (college preparatory or general studies) high school program?

Very	*Somewhat*	*Not at All*	*Don't Know*	
____	____	____	____	you
____	____	____	____	your parents/guardians
____	____	____	____	your friends
____	____	____	____	your brothers and sisters
____	____	____	____	your junior high/middle school guidance counselor
____	____	____	____	your junior high/middle school teachers
____	____	____	____	other (who?) ______________________________

Did any of the people listed above *disagree* with the decision that you would enroll in a non-vocational program? ____ Don't Know ____ No ____ Yes (who?)__________

10. How did you first learn about the high school programs and options available to you? (Check *all* answers that apply)

____ I don't know
____ junior high/middle school guidance counselor
____ junior high/middle school teachers
____ parents/guardians
____ friends
____ brothers or sisters
____ I visited the high school with a junior high class
____ I heard a high school representative speak at my junior high school
____ I read brochures or catalogs about high school programs
____ Other (what?) ____

11. During your last year in *junior high/middle school*, how often did you meet with your guidance counselor to discuss high school and your career plans?

____ Never ____ 1-2 times ____ 3-5 times ____ 6 or more times

12. Thinking back to your last year in *junior high/middle school*, do you think you had enough information to make a good decision about whether to enroll in a non-vocational high school program or a vocational education program?

____ No ____ Yes ____ Not Sure

If not, what information would have been helpful to you? ______________________

____

13. Did you ever consider or think about enrolling in a *vocational* high school program instead of a non-vocational program?

___ No, not at all ___ Yes, a little ___ Yes, a fair amount ___ Yes, a lot

14. Why did YOU enroll in a *non-vocational* high school program instead of a vocational education program? Check whether each of the following reasons influenced this decision.

Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*	*Because.......*
___	___	___	I never really thought about it; I just assumed I would.
___	___	___	I am not interested in vocational education.
___	___	___	I want to go to college.
___	___	___	My parents wanted me to attend a non-vocational program.
___	___	___	I think that vocational programs have a bad reputation.
___	___	___	I received good grades in junior high/middle school.
___	___	___	I was not sure what career I wanted to pursue.
___	___	___	I do not have the ability or skills for vocational education.
___	___	___	My guidance counselor encouraged me to enroll in a non-vocational program.
___	___	___	I thought I would get a better education in a non-vocational program than in a vocational program.
___	___	___	I prefer learning about new ideas and facts rather than practical experiences.
___	___	___	Other (what?) ______________________________

15. Why do you think OTHER STUDENTS enrolled in a *vocational* education program instead of a non-vocational high school program? Check whether you think each of the following reasons influenced their decision.

Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*	*Because.......*
___	___	___	They were interested in vocational education.
___	___	___	They do not want to go to college.
___	___	___	They already knew what career they wanted to pursue after high school.
___	___	___	They have the ability or skills for vocational education.
___	___	___	They prefer practical experiences to learning about theories and facts.
___	___	___	Their parents wanted them to attend a vocational program.
___	___	___	They need/want to be prepared to enter a job when they graduate from high school.
___	___	___	They want to be prepared to study a technical subject in college.
___	___	___	Their guidance counselors suggested that they enroll in vocational education.
___	___	___	Vocational education was the best way for them to meet their career goals.
___	___	___	They received poor grades in junior high/middle school.
___	___	___	They did not want to attend their neighborhood high school.
___	___	___	They don't know why they chose vocational education.
___	___	___	Other (what?) ________________________________

16. Since September, how often have you met with your *high school* guidance counselor to discuss your career goals and your plans after high school?

___ Never ___ 1-2 times ___ 3-5 times ___ 6 or more times

17. How satisfied are you with the guidance services that your high school provides?

___ Very satisfied ___ Somewhat ___ Slightly ___ Not at all

18. Has high school turned out to be what you thought it would be like when you were in junior high/middle school?

___ Yes ___ No, it's worse ___ No, it's better ___ Not sure

19. Have you ever thought seriously about dropping out of high school?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure

If so, has being enrolled in a non-vocational program instead of a vocational high school program helped you to stay in school?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure

20. Do you think the following people generally have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about vocational education programs offered in Massachusetts high schools?

Opinion about Vocational Education:

Favorable	*Unfavorable*	*Don't Know*	
___	___	___	your parents
___	___	___	your friends
___	___	___	you
___	___	___	your junior high/middle school teachers
___	___	___	your junior high/middle school guidance counselor
___	___	___	your brothers and sisters
___	___	___	your high school teachers
___	___	___	the general public in Massachusetts
___	___	___	employers in Massachusetts
___	___	___	college professors in Massachusetts

21. What have *your parents/guardians* encouraged you to do after high school? (Check *all* answers that apply)

___ Attend a two-year college
___ Attend a four-year college
___ Pursue vocational training
___ Enter the military
___ Work full-time
___ Work part-time
___ We have not discussed it
___ Other (what?) ________________________________

22. What has your *high school guidance counselor* encouraged you to do after high school? (Check *all* answers that apply)

____ Attend a two-year college
____ Attend a four-year college
____ Pursue vocational training
____ Enter the military
____ Work full-time
____ Work part-time
____ We have not discussed it
____ Other (what? ____

23. If you had it to do all over again, would you still enroll in a *non-vocational* high school program instead of a vocational high school program?

____ Yes ____ No ____ I'm not sure

If no, why not?____

____

COMMENTS Use the space below for comments about high school, vocational and non-vocational education programs, or the career guidance and counseling services offered in your junior high and high school.

Appendix B

Correspondence, Sample Scheduling Forms, and Instructions for Teachers

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

February 1, 1989

Dear Superintendent/Superintendent-Director:

This year the Division of Occupational Education is undertaking a survey of a sample of tenth and twelfth grade students about the reasons students decided to enroll in either vocational or non-vocational high school programs, the role others played in this decision, and students' career plans after high school. This study is intended to provide a *statewide* summary, *not* to evaluate individual schools or programs.

The survey was developed over a period of eight months and has been reviewed extensively by several groups of vocational and non-vocational personnel and students. In addition, **this survey has received the endorsement of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents.**

Your school has been selected as one of 44 high schools across the state to participate in this study, and we have identified *four vocational program areas* offered at your school in which we want to survey students. We need your cooperation and help in implementing this survey. The survey was designed to be administered in class by teachers and should take only 15-20 minutes of class time to complete.

I have enclosed a "Survey Scheduling Form" packet that describes the types of information needed. Please identify a contact person at your school who will assist us in this survey and forward the packet to him or her.

If you have any questions or need further information, please call either Rose Giaconia at (617) 770-7383 or John McDonagh at (617) 770-7380.

Thank you for your assistance. We will send you a copy of the report that summarizes *statewide* results in October, 1989. (Results will *not* be reported by individual schools.)

Sincerely,

David F. Cronin
Associate Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Education
Division of Occupational Education

VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

SURVEY SCHEDULING FORM

Instructions

This year the Division of Occupational is undertaking a statewide survey of a sample of 10th and 12th grade students about the reasons students decided to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational high school program, the role others had in this decision, and students' career plans after high school. The survey was designed to be administered in class by teachers and should take only 15-20 minutes to complete.

The Division needs your assistance in conducting this survey, in scheduling survey administration dates and overseeing the distribution and collection of surveys. Please complete the attached form, which provides pertinent survey scheduling information.

First, provide the name and phone number of a school Contact Person. This Contact Person will be responsible for scheduling classes to complete the survey, overseeing the distribution and completion of the surveys, and returning the completed surveys to the Division of Occupational Education.

Second, the top of the Survey Scheduling Form lists the types of students at your school that have been targeted to complete the survey. Identify the specific classes and teachers that match this target group, and list the teacher names and number of students in each class.

Third, list a tentative date that the survey will be administered in each class. You should schedule a convenient date **between March 9, 1989 and March 31, 1989.**

Fourth, mail the completed Survey Scheduling Form as soon as possible , but **no later than February 17, 1989** to: Division of Occupational Education, Bureau of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, 1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, MA 02169.

After we receive your completed Survey Scheduling Form, we will prepare packages of surveys for each class, including simple instructions for teachers to read to students. These packages will be mailed to the identified Contact Person, along with further instructions for overseeing the distribution and return of surveys.

Thank you for your assistance. We will send your school a copy of a report that summarizes *statewide* results in October, 1989. (Results will *not* be reported by individual schools.) If you have any questions please call either Rose Giaconia at (617) 770-7383 or John McDonagh at (617) 770-7380.

SURVEY SCHEDULING FORM

SAMPLE
VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

SCHOOL: [redacted] Regional Vocational-Technical

TARGET STUDENTS: All 10th and 12th grade vo-tech students in these program areas:
Computer Programming
Electrician
Drafting
Plumbing & Pipefitting

---

1. Contact Person:______________________________ **Phone:**____________________

2. Tentative Survey Schedule/Number of Surveys Needed

Program Area	*Grade(s)*	*Shop Teacher Name(s)*	*Number of Students in Class*	*Tentative Survey Date*
Computer Prog	10 & 12			
Electrician	10 & 12			
Drafting	10 & 12			
Plumbing	10 & 12			

Please return this completed form NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 17, 1989 to:
Division of Occupational Education, Bureau of Planning, Research, and Evaluation,
1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, MA 02169.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

High School Survey

Instructions for School Contact Person

Thank you for your help in coordinating your school's participation in the Division of Occupational Education's survey of 10th and 12th grade students.

This package contains survey packets for each teacher/class you identified on the Survey Scheduling Form. Each survey packet includes instructions for teachers and enough surveys for the number of students you indicated are in each class.

First, please check the information on the outside of each teacher's envelope to verify that this information is correct. Make any needed changes directly on the envelope.

Second, distribute the survey packets to teachers. Make sure that teachers are aware of their role in administering these surveys, the scheduled survey date, and which of their classes will be completing the survey.

Third, make sure that the surveys are administered on the scheduled dates and that all materials (including extra, unused surveys) are returned to you.

Fourth, package all materials and mail or return to:

Division of Occupational Education
Bureau of Planning, Research, & Evaluation
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169

If mailing these materials will pose problems, please call John McDonagh at (617) 770-7380 and alternate arrangements will be made for the return of the surveys.

If you have any questions, please call Rose Giaconia at (617) 770-7383 or John McDonagh at (617) 770-7380.

Your help with this project is greatly appreciated!

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

High School Survey

Instructions for Teachers

The Massachusetts Department of Education, with the cooperation of your Superintendent and your School Contact Person (listed on the front of this envelope), has selected your class to participate in a survey of tenth and twelfth grade students. The survey asks students about their reasons for enrolling in vocational or non-vocational programs and their career plans.

The survey was designed to be completed by students during class and should take no more than **15-20 minutes of class time** to complete.

Your help in administering this survey is very important.

First, check the information listed on the front of this envelope. If there are any questions or problems, for example, about the scheduled survey date or the number of surveys enclosed, notify your School Contact Person immediately.

Second, at the **beginning of class** on the scheduled date distribute a copy of the vocational version of the survey (BLUE COVER) to every student. Students should write directly on the surveys, and they may use either pencil or pen. Students should be encouraged to answer all questions completely, carefully, and honestly.

Ask students to read the instructions on the cover of the survey. ALL STUDENTS IN YOUR CLASS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS, EVEN IF THEY PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE.

Third, collect the completed surveys and be sure to return **ALL** surveys (including extra, unused copies) in this envelope to your School Contact Person.

Thank you for your assistance!

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

NON-VOCATIONAL

February 1, 1989

Dear Superintendent:

This year the Division of Occupational Education is undertaking a survey of a sample of tenth and twelfth grade students about the reasons students decided to enroll in either vocational or non-vocational high school programs, the role others played in this decision, and students' career plans after high school. This study is intended to provide a *statewide* summary, *not* to evaluate individual schools or programs.

The survey was developed over a period of eight months and has been reviewed extensively by several groups of vocational and non-vocational personnel and students. In addition, **this survey has received the endorsement of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents** (see attached letter from Peter Finn).

Your school has been selected as one of 44 high schools across the state to participate in this study. We need your cooperation and help in implementing this survey. The survey was designed to be administered in class by teachers and should take only 15-20 minutes of class time to complete.

I have enclosed a "Survey Scheduling Form" packet that describes the types and number of students we are interested in surveying. Please identify a contact person at your school who will assist us in this survey and forward the packet to him or her. This contact person will work with Occupational Education staff at your Regional Education Center in scheduling survey dates.

If you have any questions or need further information, please call either Rose Giaconia at (617) 770-7383 or John McDonagh at (617) 770-7380.

Thank you for your assistance. We will send you a copy of the report that summarizes *statewide* results in October, 1989. (Results will *not* be reported by individual schools.)

Sincerely,

David F. Cronin
Associate Commissioner

Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Inc.

President
Robert V. Antonucci
Falmouth
President-Elect
John E. Zoino
Randolph
Vice-President
Dennis M. DiSalvo
Northborough-Southborough
Immediate Past President
J. Brian Halloran
Hampden-Wilbraham

Executive Director
Peter R. Finn
Legal Counsel
Michael J. Long, Esquire
Legislative Agent
Michael J. Daly

M. A. S. S.

January 25, 1989

Mr. David Cronin
Associate Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169

Dear David:

At a meeting held on January 11, 1989 the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents voted unanimously to endorse the proposed study of Massachusetts High School Students' Perceptions of Vocational Education.

M.A.S.S. will encourage its membership to cooperate with your efforts.

Sincerely,

Peter

Peter R. Finn
Executive Director

RECEIVED
JAN 27 1989

SUITE 143, 18 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108 617-523-4263

Massachusetts Department of Education
Division of Occupational Education

NON-VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

SURVEY SCHEDULING FORM

Instructions

This year the Division of Occupational is undertaking a statewide survey of a sample of 10th and 12th grade students about the reasons students decided to enroll in a vocational or non-vocational high school program, the role others had in this decision, and students' career plans after high school. The survey was designed to be administered in class by teachers and should take only 15-20 minutes to complete.

The Division needs your assistance in conducting this survey, in scheduling survey administration dates and overseeing the distribution and collection of surveys. Please complete the attached form, which provides pertinent survey scheduling information.

First, provide the name and phone number of a school Contact Person. This Contact Person will be responsible for scheduling classes to complete the survey and overseeing the distribution and completion of the surveys.

Second, the top of the Survey Scheduling Form lists the numbers and types of students at your school that have been targeted to complete the survey. Identify the specific classes and teachers that match this target group, and list the teacher names and number of students in each class. Please make sure that the classes you select are representative of the types of students at your school; for example, do not select only advanced placement classes.

Third, call Dr. [redacted] at your Regional Education Center (617) [redacted]o discuss the classes you have selected and to schedule a date that the survey will be administered in each class. Regional Center staff will pick up the completed surveys on this scheduled date. You should schedule a convenient date **between March 9, 1989 and March 31, 1989.** List this date on the form.

Fourth, mail the completed Survey Scheduling Form as soon as possible, but **no later than February 17, 1989** to: Division of Occupational Education, Bureau of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, 1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, MA 02169.

After we receive your completed Survey Scheduling Form, we will prepare packages of surveys for each class, including simple instructions for teachers to read to students. These packages will be mailed to the identified Contact Person, along with further instructions for overseeing the distribution and collection of surveys.

Thank you for your assistance. We will send your school a copy of a report that summarizes *statewide* results in October, 1989. (Results will *not* be reported by individual schools.) If you have any questions please call either Rose Giaconia at (617) 770-7383 or John McDonagh at (617) 770-7380.

SURVEY SCHEDULING FORM

SAMPLE
NON-VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

SCHOOL: [redacted] High School

TARGET STUDENTS: (1) *Approximately* 80-100 non-vocational 10th grade students
(2) *Approximately* 80-100 non-vocational 12th grade students

We recommend selecting intact classes (such as English or homeroom) that include a representative mix of the types of non-vocational students found at your school. Keep in mind that the survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete.

---

1. Contact Person:____________________________ **Phone:**____________________

2. Tentative Survey Schedule/Number of Surveys Needed

Grade(s)	*Teacher Name(s)*	*Number of Students in Class*	*Tentative Survey Date*
10			
12			

Please return this completed form NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 17, 1989 to:
Division of Occupational Education, Bureau of Planning, Research, and Evaluation,
1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, MA 02169.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

NON-VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

High School Survey

Instructions for School Contact Person

Thank you for your help in coordinating your school's participation in the Division of Occupational Education's survey of 10th and 12th grade students.

This package contains survey packets for each teacher/class you identified on the Survey Scheduling Form. Each survey packet includes instructions for teachers and enough surveys for the number of students you indicated are in each class.

First, please check the information on the outside of each teacher's envelope to verify that this information is correct. Make any needed changes directly on the envelope.

Second, distribute the survey packets to teachers. Make sure that teachers are aware of their role in administering these surveys, the scheduled survey date, and which of their classes will be completing the survey.

You should also confirm the arrangements you made with Dr. [redacted] at your Regional Education Center (617) [redacted] about the dates and times that Regional Center staff will pick up the completed surveys.

Third, make sure that the surveys are administered on the scheduled dates and that all materials (including extra, unused surveys) are returned to you.

Fourth, give all materials to your Regional Center staff according to the arrangements you made with them.

If you have any questions, please call Rose Giaconia at (617) 770-7383 or John McDonagh at (617) 770-7380.

Your help with this project is greatly appreciated!

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

NON-VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

High School Survey

Instructions for Teachers

The Massachusetts Department of Education, with the cooperation of your Superintendent and your School Contact Person (listed on the front of this envelope), has selected your class to participate in a survey of tenth and twelfth grade students. The survey asks students about their reasons for enrolling in vocational or non-vocational programs and their career plans.

The survey was designed to be completed by students during class and should take no more than **15-20 minutes of class time** to complete.

Your help in administering this survey is very important.

First, check the information listed on the front of this envelope. If there are any questions or problems, for example, about the scheduled survey date or the number of surveys enclosed, notify your School Contact Person immediately.

Second, at the **beginning of class** on the scheduled date distribute a copy of the non-vocational version of the survey (GREEN COVER) to every student. Students should write directly on the surveys, and they may use either pencil or pen. Students should be encouraged to answer all questions completely, carefully, and honestly.

Ask students to read the instructions on the cover of the survey. ALL STUDENTS IN YOUR CLASS SHOULD BE NON-VOCATIONAL STUDENTS. If, after reading the instructions, any student insists that he or she is a **vocational** student, please give that student a copy of the vocational version of the survey (blue cover).

Third, collect the completed surveys and be sure to return **ALL** surveys (including extra, unused copies) in this envelope to your School Contact Person.

Thank you for your assistance!